

Christmas With Santa Claus

By
FRANCES
TREGO
MONTGOMERY
Author of
BILLY
WHISKERS



Ruth Hallock.

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Florence Armstrong
From Santa Claus.
in 1917.



He gently lifted him out of his pocket.
(Page 28)

CHRISTMAS WITH SANTA CLAUS

BY

FRANCES TREGO MONTGOMERY

Author of

"Billy Whisker Series," "The Wonderful Electric Elephant," "On a Lark to the Planets," "Frances and The Irrepressibles at Buena Vista Farm," etc. . . .

Illustrated in colors by
RUTH MARY HALLOCK

THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING CO.

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Lovingly dedicated to
MIRIAM GLADYS MORRISON

Illustrations.

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Off for Santa Claus' Home.



Y! Isn't it cold?" said Jack to Gladys as the two little tots played together in the big farm yard.

"Yes, drefful!" replied Gladys.

"Don't you wish we had a papa?" said Jack "so he could kill rabbits and make us fine coats out of the skins, like the papa did in Mother Goose?"

"There goes one now" cried Gladys. "Let us run and see if we can't catch it."

So they crawled through a hole in the fence, and commenced to chase the bunny as he ran down the country road, heaped high with snowbanks on either side.

Half an hour later a woman's shrill voice called "Jack! Jack! Gladys! Gladys! Where are you?" but no voice answered her.

"Where in the world can they have gone. It is too cold for them to play out longer, beside, it is growing dark."

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"My! Isn't it cold?" said Jack.

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This was said by the farmer's wife, who had adopted these two little children and brought them home with her from a city Orphan Asylum.

These children had been kidnapped by a man, for the reward he expected to get for their return; but finding he was too closely followed, by detectives and police, to hide them that he might extort money from their parents, he took them to an orphan asylum and told the matron that he had found them wandering alone in the woods. Before he took them to the asylum, he frightened them nearly to death by threatening to cut out their tongues if they dared to tell any one he had stolen them.

The boy was a sturdy little fellow, with deep brown eyes, set in a chubby, round face, that promised great beauty when matured. His hair was dark, wavy and very fine. The little girl was slender, and as delicate looking as a flower, with large blue eyes and golden hair that fell in fluffy curls about her shoulders. The boy was a head and shoulders taller than the girl, and was one year older, being just five, while she was but four.

"I never knew them to stay out so late. I hope they have not gone outside of the farm yard, for they could easily wander off and get lost," so raising her voice, the good wife called again and again—"Jack! Jack! Gladys! Gladys!" But the wind only whistled in her

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face, and Jack Frost bit her nose, while no childish voices answered.

In the meantime, the children had chased the rabbit, following it up hill and down, under fences and around trees, until they were completely worn out because of the deep snow. At last they had given up the uneven chase—their little short legs against the long ones of the bunny—and had sat down on a snowbank to rest.

“Jack, I wish we had a really, truly mamma, to love and pet us, for I’m drefful cold and tired, and I’m afraid I’m a-goin’ to cry,” which she immediately commenced to do softly; two great tears rolled partly down her cheek and froze there, looking like little drops of dew.

Small as he was, Jack had a man’s horror of tears, so he tried to comfort her as best he could, by putting his little fat arms around her and kissing the tears from off her cheeks. In his endeavors to soothe her grief, he quite forgot that he too was cold and lonely and would like a mamma also to take him on her lap, pet him and warm his little cold toes before a blazing, crackling grate fire.

“Look, Jack, look at that booful moon just peeping up over the tops of the trees, making all the snow sparkle like diamonds. I ’spect a fairy has been along here and sprinkled it with diamonds, as she did in the fairy story book the Sunday School teacher read to us.”

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"Hush! What is that? I hear a sleigh bell. Maybe some one will come along and drive us home."

They both looked in the direction from which the sound came, expecting to see a farmer's sleigh with cow bells on the horses, but instead, coming straight toward them in the moonlight, they saw eight beautiful reindeers, with silver-tipped antlers from which hung silver bells that rang out a merry tune on the clear, frosty air. Next, they saw that the reindeer were drawing a beautiful, red sleigh, half-hidden by snow-white polar bear robes—and in their midst sat Santa Claus!

Could it be? That was most too good to be true; but what other person on earth could have such a jolly, round, rosy face, beard of such milky whiteness, and eyes that twinkled so merrily from under a red-turbaned hat, trimmed with otter? It must be Santa Claus! And he it truly was, but what was he doing on earth, several days before Christmas?

While they were thinking this, Santa Claus had come up to them and, yes, he was actually stopping and getting out before them.

"Well! Well! little snowbirds! Where did you two little Chick-a-dee-dees come from? You look half frozen. Better come with me and I will take you home."

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"We haven't any home" said Jack. "We're just 'dopted; and we don't care for our new home, it's so lonesome."

"And our new mamma don't know how to pet us," put in Gladys.

"So you have run away, have you?" asked Santa Claus.

"No, not on purpose. We ran after a rabbit, trying to see if we could catch it, so we could make rabbit-skin coats to keep us warm, but we couldn't catch the bunny, and when we started to go home, we found we were losted.

"Well! I have found you now, and as I want two nice little children like you to take home to Mrs. Santa Claus, I guess if you will go with me I will adopt you on the spot, and let the farmer's wife go back to the Orphan Asylum, if she wants to adopt any more children. So, come along now or you will freeze fast to the snow-bank you are sitting on. Come, climb into my big fur-lined pockets. They are big enough to hold you, as they go clear to the bottom of my coat. I had them made to carry presents in, and now I will use them to carry a present to Mrs. Santa Claus.

"I suppose you wonder how it happens that I am here ahead of the real Christmas Eve time? Well! I will tell you. I come to get the letters the little folks write and put in the chimneys and letter-boxes, telling me what they want for Christmas.

"I come a few days before time, so that Mrs. Santa Claus and I can

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have time to make the toys the children ask for, and get them painted ready for Christmas eve. Mother Santa Claus dresses the dolls, while I make and paint the sleighs, hobby-horses and so forth. If you turn out to be good children, you can help us in our work. Jack can help me, while sister can help dress dolls and make sweet-cakes."

"She isn't my sister, she is my sweetheart; and we are going to run away and get married, when we are big enough, and live in a house of our own. Gladys is going to cook, wash and iron, while I go to work with a tin pail on my arm, with my lunch in it."

"What kind of work are you going to do?"

"Oh! I'm going to be a conductor, so I can punch tickets; or a circus-rider. If I am a circus-rider, Gladys is going to wear sticky-out skirts and ride bare-backed, while I crack a long whip at her horse. Aren't you Gladys?" said Jack.

"Yes, and I'm going to help feed the animals, when all the people have gone."

"Well, I see that you have things nicely planned for your future," said Santa Claus.

"What's our future?" asked Gladys.

"Your future is what you intend to do when you are older," he replied. "When your noses get cold, just stick your heads down in my pockets, and pull the flaps over them, and there you will be in

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little fur houses as warm as a moth in a rug. I will tell you when we come to anything interesting to look at."

The little ones nestled down, one in each pocket, and were soon as warm as kittens.

"Hi, there! children, If you find anything good to eat, just help yourselves. I think you will find nuts, raisins and oranges, if you reach down far enough, and probably some candy too, for I carry such things in my pockets, and often the parcels come untied or the papers around them get torn, and some of the good things roll out."

Sure enough, they found not only the nice things he had mentioned, but some maccaroons, and sweet-cakes with raisins in them, all glazed over with pink icing.

"Oh, Jack! I've found such a grand cake in my pocket" called Gladys, sticking her head out from under the flap. "What did you find?"

"I found some nuts, raisins and an orange in mine, and if you will give me some of your cake I will give you some of my nuts and half my orange" called back Jack.

"Very well, here it is." But her little chubby arms could not reach around Santa Claus' roly-poly stomach, so they had to pass their things across his back and in so doing nearly upset him, and fell out of his pockets.

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"What are you two little rascals up to?" he cried.

He was standing in the sleigh so he could more readily see the road and where the reindeer were going. He liked traveling over the house-tops and through the sky much better, for then he did not have to look out for stones and trees which lay across his path.

"Children, stick your heads out and see that high mountain just ahead of us. I am going to drive to the top of that, and from there whisk off into space and take a direct line toward my home behind the North Pole. Now stick your heads under cover again, and I will tell you when I get to the top of the mountain so you can see the first bound my reindeer make off into space. They love to travel there, for they know they are then on their way home. They will prick up their ears and go with the speed of lightning, racing with the North Wind and the Snow King, to see who can get back to the North Pole first, for you know we are all neighbors, there.

As they cuddled down in their cozy little nests, they could hear him call out "On, Dunder and Blitzen! Mind your way, Comet and Vixen! Down, Dancer and Prancer!" And the reindeer, answering to his calls, shook their heads until all the little silver bells jingled, and then sped on into the frosty night toward the twinkling stars.

Presently, Santa Claus called to the children to look out again.

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On doing so, they found themselves on the topmost peak of a high mountain, with the valleys, hills and villages beneath them wrapped in a soft white mantle of snow, with lights that looked like jeweled buttons on it, here and there, while above them shone the deep night sky, like a blue velvet cloak sprinkled with silver stars, with the big round moon for a clasp.

"Now! All together, my reindeer!" called Santa Claus—and with a bound they leaped upward from the mountain-top, and traveled straight for the North Star, which is directly over the North Pole; traveling through the air as silently, smoothly and noiselessly as a whisper, with never a scrape or jolt of the silver runners as they pulled the sleigh after them—higher, and higher, nearer and nearer the stars. The only sound they heard was the whistling of the North Wind, as he blew a gruff "ha! ha!" at them, calling out that he was going to beat them home; or the voice of the Snow King, as he blew flakes of snow in their faces and called out "Better stick your heads in, or I will turn you into snow-babies!"

They traveled this way all night, but at last they found the reindeer had ceased going upward, and were taking a downward course.

They stuck out their heads to know the reason why, and Santa Claus told them it was because they were directly over the North Pole now, and he was driving back to earth, as his home was there.

Off for Santa Claus' Home.

"You see I always head for the North Star as that is my guide; then when I get there I simply drop to earth, and there I am safe and sound at my own stable-door."

"But I don't see any pole sticking out of the earth, with polar bears playing around it" said Jack.

At this remark Santa Claus laughed, so that he nearly shook their heads off, being in his pockets as they were, for his sides went in and out like bellows.

"You queer little tots you! Don't you know there is no wooden pole sticking out of the earth, but that it is only an imaginary, make-believe one that people talk about, when they speak of the North Pole?"

"No, I never knew that before" said Jack.

"I thought there was a soda fountain up there, where you could get soda water for noffen" said Gladys. "I've seen pictures of it in my books, and there were free cute little white polar bears, sitting on their tails straight up, drinking soda water. And one had strawberry in his glass and another chocolate, 'cause I knew by the color that's what he had—and I want some too!" said Gladys.

"Well! you little honey, you shall see lots of polar bears up here and have all the soda water you want, but the bears won't be sitting on their tails, nor the soda water coming out of an iceberg, as it is

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in your picture book” said Santa Claus. “Mother Santa Claus will give you all the soda water you want, for she knows how to make the best you ever drank, and I will give you a roly-poly white-bear for a pet, if you want him; I have six beauties as tame as kittens that you can play with.”

“I guess I don’t want one” said Gladys. “I’m afraid he might love me so he would squeeze me to death, or lick my face like a dog, and I don’t like that. Give him to Jack, ’cause he is a big boy and likes polar bears, but I like little weensie, teensie kittens bestest.”

“Very well dear; and now look sharp, for in a second you can see the towers of my home sticking above the hilltops.”

“Oh, look! look!” cried Gladys, a moment later. “Isn’t that booful? that green house with the candy icing sticking to it, over the windows!”

“You silly!” said Jack, “That isn’t a candy house. That is Santa Claus’ home, and it is made of clear, green ice; and the stuff you call candy icing is ice and snow frozen in the shape of pears and grapes, to make the windows look pretty, like our house with the carved white marble over them.

“How do you know so much about it? You were never here before!”

“I asked Santa Claus and he told me all about it.”

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"Well! I want to hear it, so he must tell it all over again to me" said the tyrannical little Miss Gladys.

"All right" said Santa Claus who had overheard this conversation. "I will tell you all about my home and everything up here, if you will both promise to keep still and listen."

"Very well; we will," said Gladys.

"My home is built of ice, as you see."

"But I don't want to live in an ice house" said Gladys, interrupting, "because I would freeze to death."

"No, dear, you would not, and if you will only listen and not interrupt me until I get through, you will see what a nice, magic home I live in."

"Very well" said Gladys with a deep sigh.

It always made her sigh when she was told to keep still, if even for a short time; she was such a chatterbox, and she said it made her tired to hold her tongue still.



Santa Claus' House *and Grounds.*

DIRECTLY behind the spot where the North Pole would stick out of the ground, if there really and truly were a pole, instead of a make-believe one, stands the most beautiful house with towers and turrets, like a castle. It is built of emerald-green ice, cut in squares to represent stone, sealed together with frost and snow that never melts. The windows are of clear white ice, as thin as a piece of glass, while over the tops of both windows and doors are the most beautiful bunches of snow-and-ice grapes and pears.

Within, this castle home is as convenient and elegant as any home, with a big sitting-room, the cosiest you were ever in. Though there is always a big grate fire burning, that sends sparks from the big logs of wood up the chimney, the ice never melts; for, both inside and out, the house is coated with a magic varnish that resists the heat, and keeps the ice the house is made of from melting.

Santa Claus' House and Grounds.

In the sitting-room, is Mrs. Santa Claus, seated in a high-backed rocker, making clothes for the dolls that Santa Claus is to give away on Christmas. At her side on the floor is a work basket, in which are dolls of all sizes. At present, she is knitting blue-and-pink silk stockings for them, while waiting for the return of her husband.

As she sits there rocking peacefully to and fro, before the bright grate fire, she makes the most pleasing picture of a motherly, jolly-faced old lady you ever saw. Her hair is light, scarcely touched with gray, while her cheeks are as round and rosy as her husband's, and her dimples quite as deep. As for her eyes and mouth, they are in a race to see which can smile the sweetest. Her laugh is low and musical, and just to be with her means peace and contentment.

"I wonder why he doesn't come?" she says to herself for the fortieth time, as she glances at the tall old-fashioned clock in the corner, that chimes out all the hours and half-hours. "He is quite half-an-hour late, and I never knew him to be five minutes late before."

As she says this, she lays her knitting on the basket and walks to the window to look out. Just as she does so, she sees coming through the snow, round the house, Santa Claus. But what is the matter with him? He seems to be staggering through the snow, as if carrying a load; still he has no bundle in his hands, or on his back. Can he be

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ill? It can't be that, for he has never been ill a day in his life.

Now he is under the window, out of which she is looking. Seeing her he throws her a kiss, but nearly topples over as he does so, for out of one of his pockets bobs a golden, curly head, and out of the other a rosy-faced boy's head appears.

"Gracious goodness! What kind of jumping dolls is he bringing home now, for me to dress?" says Mrs. Santa Claus as she leaves the window and hurries to the door to meet the new comer.

"Well! Well! What makes you so late dear?" said Mrs. Santa Claus as she opened the door. "I expect it was the new dolls I saw pop their heads out of your pocket, when I looked from the window."

"That is it, Honey. There! Give me a kiss and I will show you two of the most natural-looking dolls you ever saw, and they can both walk and talk. Come into the sitting-room, where it is warm and I will show them to you."

Carefully taking Jack by the back of his collar, he gently lifted him out of his pocket, and set him on the floor. Then he did the same to Gladys, but instead of standing still, and playing she was a doll, as Jack was doing, she ran to Mrs. Santa Claus and cried "Take me up in your arms and kiss me. I love you, you are so pretty! And I want a mamma to love me, 'cause I'm lonesome."

Santa Claus' House and Grounds.

"You dear, sweet, precious little girl, so I *will* be a mamma to you, and kiss and hug you to your heart's content."

"And now won't brother come and give me a kiss?"

"He isn't my brother. He is my sweetheart, and we is going to be married when we grows up. Ain't we Jack? Come and kiss her Jack, 'cause I love her, and you will too, she is so nice and comfy."

Jack was as anxious to be folded in Mrs. Santa Claus' arms, and be petted as Gladys had been, but boy-like he did not care to own-up that he was fond of being coddled. Someone had given him the wrong idea, by telling him that to be affectionate was not manly. Who ever heard of such a mistake? The bravest men are the most loving and gentle. After hanging back for a time, with a bashful look on his face, he took a step nearer, his finger in his mouth, and then—with a quick toss of his head, as if he were throwing bashfulness to the winds—he gave a little run and jumped up into Mrs. Santa Claus' lap, laid his head on her shoulder and, with a sigh of relief, nestled down for a comfortable rest in her motherly lap. At first Gladys was on one knee and Jack on the other, but this arrangement was too crowded for the restless little girl, so she slipped down and going over to Santa Claus climbed up on his knee, but she could not sit comfortably there because of his little, roly-poly stomach.

"My dear Uncle Santa Claus," for this is what she had decided

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to call him, "why don't you cut off your stomach? 'cause it's in my way, and I can't rest comfortable on your lap at all."

This remark made Santa Claus laugh so, that he nearly choked and when he got his breath he said: "I wish I could, dear, because it is a great nuisance, especially when I try to button my shoes or stoop over. But, never mind, come and sit on the arm of my chair, and I will tell you a story. There! One, two, three, jump! And here you are!"

As he told the story, her busy little fingers braided his long white beard into strands, when, with wide-open eyes, she was not too much taken-up listening to the story, for such a fascinating story you never heard before, of fairy palaces under the sea where big walruses and whales lived. This is one she liked particularly well, and made him tell it over and over again.





"Did I hear you say, 'Before you were stolen?'"
(Page 43)

The Story of the Sea-King.



WAY down deep under the cold, green waters of the Arctic Ocean, live the walruses and whales. They should be called the elephants of the waters, as many of them are larger than our elephants that roam the jungles. You may think it is not pretty down there, and that it must be dark and dismal away from the sun, but you are mistaken; it is most beautiful with its palaces of silver ice, and halls and caves of lofty and extensive dimensions, through which shoals of walruses, whales and seals, swim and play.

One day a Sea-King, more venturesome than the rest, drove his twelve sea-horses hitched to a shell-chariot, right up through Baffin's Bay, past Greenland, and into the Straits that led him directly to the Arctic Ocean. Here he was astonished to find the most beautiful country and natural palaces of ice, that he had ever beheld, but he was greatly alarmed to find, instead of Sea-Kings, only huge sea-monsters like walruses and whales living in these palaces.

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At first he felt afraid, but he soon found that these monsters, though large, were timid and easily frightened away by his long spear which he stuck into them when they came too near. Very few came that near, however, for the snort of his sea-horses and the loud blast that he blew on his shell-trumpet was enough to scare them away.

After exploring these strange regions, driving through their strange caves and halls, he decided to return to his own domains to get his sons and daughters, their sons and daughters, with their husbands, wives and children, and return with them to this land, take possession of it, and set himself up as king, his wife as queen, with their children and their children's children as his subjects.

Where he was now living, was becoming over-populated and he was finding it hard to secure suitable husbands for his many mermaid-daughters; so turning his horses' heads toward the South, he drove them with such fury that their hoofs ploughed up the water in such gigantic waves, that the Lapps along the shore thought a hurricane must be raging out at sea, where they saw the waves and white-caps rolling. They did not know that the white-caps were the long white manes of the Sea-King's horses, that rose to the surface now and then.

At last he reached his own country, where he commanded his queen to give a grand ball and banquet, and invite all relatives, old

The Story of the Sea-King.

and young, adding to the invitation that he who stayed away invited death.

When this last clause was added to the invitation, the queen thought her husband had surely lost his mind, especially as he had been acting queerly ever since his return from the North.

Being an obedient queen, she said nothing and the invitations were sent with this strange ending.

When they were received, there was great rejoicing; for it was well known throughout the kingdom what magnificent balls and banquets this particular Sea-King always gave, but when they came to the last clause, their joy was turned to surprise or anger, for they thought it read more as a command than an invitation. The elder sons said they would not accept as they were too old to be dictated to even by their father; while the wives said: "He must be crazy to end an invitation like that." Every one had something to say about this strange wording, but either out of curiosity, or for love of the old king, in the end they all went to the ball.

For the three days that they were on their way to the Sea-King's castle, there had never been known such a rough and choppy sea, even by the oldest seamen afloat. First there would be rolling waves as high as a house, then choppy little ones and all were capped with either white caps, yellow caps, or even black caps, something

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they had never seen before. Little did they know of the racing chargers with flowing manes of white, yellow and black, that were speeding along beneath the waves carrying sea princes, princesses and mermaids to the grand festivities at the Sea-King's palace.

Arrived at their destination they gazed in amazement. Such a beautiful sight they had never beheld on sea or land, as this lofty castle, built entirely of tiny, white shells with rose-pink centers, that opened and shut with every motion of the water, giving a most beautiful effect. One minute the castle would be pink, when the shells were open, showing their pink centers; the next minute it would be white, when the water closed the shells.

There were no windows or doors, only large openings where our doors and windows would be, so the water could flow in and out freely; for of course these sea people could not live without water any more than we could without air. The castle was lighted by phosphorus fish, that swam around, in and out, all the time; they had the appearance of swinging lamps. The ball-room was long and lofty, with arched ceilings from which hung strings of festooned pearls and sea-anemones. Around the hall were dark-green waving plants, and beautiful yellow, pink and lavender sea-feathers and fans, that swayed and changed the water in the room, as our electric fans change the air in our rooms.

The Story of the Sea-King.

At either end of the hall were lights that shed a soft glow on the lovely mermaids, as they glided through the dance gracefully, as our own young ladies glide through the waltz, managing their tails and fins much as our young ladies carry their trails and fans.

These mermaids were most beautiful with their pale-gold, or blue-black hair, strung with pearls, coral and trailing sea-vines; while their fishy-dresses were of as many colors and tints as if made of shimmering satin.

The Sea-King's sons had fishy bodies like the mermaids, but the upper part of their bodies were strong and muscular-looking, and they wore their hair short, while the mermaids always wore theirs flowing around their shoulders, until married, and then they coiled it around their heads like a crown, and held it in place by a golden comb, or strings of pearls were woven in their braids.

At exactly twelve o'clock, marine time, a loud blast was blown upon a musical shell. The mermaid-men chose their partners and all repaired to the banquet hall. After much feasting and laughter, accompanied by weird music, played on strange harps, shells and reeds, the Sea-King arose. After drinking a toast to all, he told them why he had called them together; describing the strange, beautiful country he had found in the North, and how it was inhabited by no people, but by huge sea-monsters the size of which they could not

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realize unless they saw them. Then he told them he wished them to leave the country where they now were, and follow him up north, where they would establish a new kingdom which would be all their own.

After listening to this tale, with open eyes of wonder and bated breaths, they all consented to go.

Then he told them, that instead of returning to their homes, he wished them to steal off to this strange land that very night; so as not to excite the envy of the other sea-kings, and cause them to follow. "This is why," the Sea-King concluded, "I put in my invitation, that he who stayed away invited death; for he would be left behind, not knowing where we had gone, and then he would gradually pine away and die."

They one and all consented to go, for he promised them untold riches; adding that for every one thing left behind, they would find two in the wonderful, new country.

By two o'clock his castle halls were deserted; the lights were out and the musicians were stealing on behind the long, silent procession that was wending its way to the North, where the walruses and whales lived. Could you look down, down, down through the cold, clear waters of the Arctic Ocean, far enough, you might see the

The Story of the Sea-King.

Sea-King and his mermaid daughters in their palaces of ice, in their new kingdom under the sea.

“Oh, my! Santa Claus, that was such a lovely story! And here is a kiss for telling it to me. How I wish Jack could have heard it too!” said Gladys.



The First Night at Santa's.

WHEN Gladys turned to see what Jack was doing, she called out, "Oh, look at Jack! He has gone to sleep in Aunty's lap!" And sure enough he had. The poor, tired little fellow, had found rest and comfort at last.

"Well! well! Santa," said his wife, "how selfish we have been, enjoying these precious children and forgetting all about how tired, hungry and sleepy they must be. So taking Jack up carefully in her arms, she laid him on the large, comfortable lounge near the fire and covered him over with a soft light coverlet of swansdown. "There little darling, lie still and slumber, while I go and prepare a nice supper for you."

Gladys who heard this said, "Let me go too, for I am hungry."

Though Gladys was both tired and hungry, she was of too excitable a disposition to keep still; she was one of the kind who would go until she dropped from fatigue, if some one did not stop her.

The First Night at Santa's.

"Oh my! Oh my!" cried Gladys clapping her hands with delight as she entered the kitchen. "Isn't this room just too booful for anything, with all those shiny pots and pans hanging on the wall, and the queer-looking fireplace with its brass kettle sizzling and spluttering on a big brass hook over the fire."

"Oh! what lovely kittens!" she exclaimed as she spied a beautiful Angora cat and five little kittens curled up on a black bear-skin by the fire. In a minute she was down on the rug with the five kittens in her lap, the old cat standing guard beside her.

What a picture they made! The beautiful golden-haired child on the black rug, with the sleek white kittens in her lap, against the background of the fireplace, lit up by the fire and the shiny, bright pans and kettles on the wall.

Santa Claus and his wife thought they had never in their lives, seen a lovelier sight.

Soon Mrs. Santa Claus had some bread and butter, strawberry-jam and a pitcher of half-cream and half-milk on the table, besides a plate of cookies and a dish of luscious fruit, as well as some cold, sliced tongue.

"Is that all you are going to give them?" asked Santa Claus. "They will want some meat, potatoes and gravy."

"That is all you know about children, my dear. Don't you

Christmas with Santa Claus.

know they must not have meat and such things at night, just before going to bed?"

As she said this she heard the door creak, and looking round she saw Jack standing in the door rubbing his sleepy eyes and peering around in a dazed way.

"Well, dearie, did you have a nice nap? Come now and get something to eat."

"But first come and see these lovely kittens, Jack," said Gladys. "Can I have them for my very own pets? dear Aunty Santa Claus?" she asked.

"Yes, dear, you may if you will put them down now, and come to supper."

"Can't I bring them with me?" asked Gladys, rising and trying to carry them by holding up the corners of her dress. But alas! her dress slipped from her fingers and down tumbled the kittens. Feeling very much abused at such treatment, they scampered off and ran under the cupboard, so she could not get them.

"Never mind, dear, come and get something to eat; and by the time you are through with supper they will be out again."

"Oh! what nice little cakes wiv raisins in um! Can I pick out the raisins and eat um first if I want to?"

She asked this, because she had never been allowed to do so at

The First Night at Santa's.



"Can't I bring them with me?" asked Gladys.

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home, but Mrs. Santa Claus was lenient and she thought it made no difference whether the children ate all the raisins then or with their cake, just so they ate them. She worried for fear they would not eat enough and would grow thin and pale, but she did not mind just how they ate.

After they had finished their meal she told them they could play around for a time, as she did not want to put them to bed directly after eating.

They had been playing for about half-an-hour, when she lit a candle and said "Come, children, it is time to go to bed now," and like obedient children, they stopped their play and followed her out into a big, dark hall, up wide stairs with many landings, into a big room with high ceilings; in which stood two high-canopied, mahogany beds, coverlets and drapings of dark red silk, with valance of the same.

"Oh, Jack! I've seen beds like that at my Grandma's in Philadelphia, before that nasty, big, dark man stole us, and took us to the Orphan Asylum. Don't you 'member how we used to play it was our home, and have under it for our down-stairs, and the bed for the up-stairs, and the canopy for the roof? And then we would pretend that the big feather-bed was a bank of snow, and we used to frow pillows at each other," said Gladys.

The First Night at Santa's.

"What is that you are saying?" inquired Mrs. Santa Claus. "Did I hear you say, 'before you were stolen?'"

"Why yes! Didn't you know Jack and I didn't live in an Orphan Asylum?" asked Gladys with wide-open big, blue eyes.

"Why, no dear, I didn't know you remembered ever having lived anywhere else."

"My, sakes alive!" said Jack, "Gladys and I weren't like other children there, 'cause we had a papa and mamma that we had been stolen from, and the other children's papas and mammas were dead, and that was what made the difference."

"Gracious goodness me," said Mrs. Santa Claus to herself. "I must see to this. If those children have been stolen, we must find their parents at once, before their mammas go crazy. I am sure I should go stark, staring mad, if I had such sweet children and they were stolen from me. I must put them to bed quickly and then go down stairs and talk it over with Santa and see what is to be done."

Soon the little tots were ready for bed and they knelt down at Mrs. Santa Claus' knee to say their prayers. Here is Gladys' prayer:

"Now I lay me down to sleep, but please dear Lord wake me up early 'cause I want a long day to play in; but if I never wake up, please take me to heaven to play with your little angel boys and girls, and don't leave me in the cold ground down here. And don't forget,

Christmas with Santa Claus.

dear Lord—now please don't forget—to find my mamma for me, 'cause I'm lonesome wivout her and I know she is lonesome for her baby too. God bless my own papa and mamma, and Jack, and Aunt Santa Claus, and make me a good little girl, so when I die I will go to heaven sure."

"Goodness! what a long prayer you say, Gladys, I thought you would never get through, and my knees have most gone through the carpet," said Jack. "I can't help it," said Gladys, "they are my troubles and the things I want, and mamma said if anything bothered me, to just tell God about it and I needn't worry about it any more, and you see Jack, I worry terrible about mamma if I don't ask God to find her for me."

"All right, dearie, make your prayer just as long as you want to, for what your mamma said was true, and He will help you to find both papa and mamma."

"Now, Jack, say your prayer too," said Mrs. Santa Claus.

"Mine is shorter than Gladys', but I want just the things she does; if she asks for them, I will get mine too; so I will ask for something else."

"Dear Lord, bless everybody I know, especially the little orphans who haven't found a Santa Claus and an Aunt Santa Claus, and help my papa find the man who stole us, so he can pound him

The First Night at Santa's.

black and blue, like Mike Finn did Johnny Jones the day Johnny stole his red apple, because I want papa to pound him for stealing us. Please don't have it rain or snow tomorrow, so Gladys and I can go out and see what it looks like up here at the North Pole. And don't let the Orphan Asylum people find us up here, nor the farmer's wife either, so she can take us back to live with her. And I most forgot—please send Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa Claus a dear little boy and girl for a Christmas present, 'cause they ain't got any and they want some children awfully, and they won't miss us when You find our papa and mamma for us and we go home. Amen."

"Yours was longer than mine, Jack, and I'm most frozen waiting for you to get through."

"Now, dears, jump into bed."

"But, we can't, it is so high," said Jack.

"Oh yes you can. Watch and see what jumps out from under the bed."

They both stared, expecting to see some kind of an animal stick its head out from under the curtains, but instead, out flew a little pair of steps, just high enough to reach the bed.

"How did you do it," said Jack.

"Watch closely and I will make them jump back."

With a wave of her hand and these words "Presto! Change!" in flew the little steps.

Christmas with Santa Claus.

"Make them come out again" said Gladys, clapping her hands with delight.

Again Mrs. Santa Claus waved her hand and said "Appear little steps!" and out they flew as before.

"How do you do it," cried Jack. "Let me do it."

"Very well," said Mrs. Santa Claus. "Now wave your hand as I did and say, 'Presto! Change!'"

He did so but the little steps refused to move, then Gladys tried, but with the same result. The steps still stood there.

"Now, you do it and see if they will mind you, Aunty."

She waved her hands, said "Presto! Change!" and in they flew.

By this time the children were wild with excitement over the mysterious "flying-steps," as Gladys called them.

"Now, if you will promise to go right to bed and to sleep, I will show you how to do it."

She then showed them an ivory button on the side of the bed, which when pressed made the little steps fly out, and when pressed again, made them fly back.

"Oh! aren't they too cute for anything," said Gladys. "Let me make them fly just once, and then I'll go straight to bed."

Her joy was unbounded, when at the pressure of her little fingers, the steps flew out.

The First Night at Santa's.

"Jack, you come now and try."

He did and the steps flew back.

"Ain't this a lovely secret," said Gladys, who dearly loved anything that could possibly be called a secret, or was at all mysterious.

Soon the two little tots were nicely tucked in bed and they looked as cozy as two little birds in a nest, cuddling way down in the feather-beds, which rose on either side of them like snow banks, for you must know that it is so cold up here that every one has to sleep in a feather-bed, as they did in olden times, and not on mattresses, as people do now-a-days.

They had been asleep about an hour, when Gladys was awakened by something biting her toe. She gave a kick, opened her eyes and saw something run across her face. She screamed with fright and started to jump out of bed, when down dropped the bottom, taking her with it and the top fell over her, burying her under its silken canopy. As luck would have it, it fell in such a way that she was not hurt, but one might as well be hurt as scared to death, and she commenced to scream and kick for dear life. This awoke Jack who didn't know what the matter was, when his little sleepy eyes first saw the tumbled-down bed which he could see clearly in the moonlight, as a full moon was shining in the room making it almost as light as day, and it really looked as if the man in the moon had stopped, out of curiosity, to look in as he passed, the light came in so directly.

Christmas with Santa Claus.

"Gladys! Gladys! What is the matter? Don't cry. I'll save you," said her valiant little lover, as he literally fell out of bed in his endeavor to get to her more quickly. He grabbed the covers and commenced to pull as if his life depended upon it, but they would not budge, being so tightly held down by the top of the bed. He was just starting for help when the door opened and there stood Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa Claus in their night robes, with a lighted candle held high over their heads.

For a second they could not move for surprise; then in a jiffy, Santa Claus raised the head of the bed and Mrs. Santa Claus threw the covers right and left, and soon came to Gladys bunched up in a little heap down at the very bottom between two feather pillows, nearly smothered to death, but not hurt in the least.

"Come to its Aunty, darling!" said Mrs. Santa Claus, talking to Gladys as she held her in her arms and rocked back and forth, as if she were a baby. "Tell its Aunty how it happened."

"I was sound asleep when something bit my toe, and waked me up; and then I felt something run all over me, and I cried, and jumped up; and down went the bed, and most smothered me."

"Something bit you! My darling you must have dreamed it, for there is nothing in the bed that could bite your toe and run over your face."

The First Night at Santa's.

"Yes, there was," said Gladys in a positive tone, and just then to Mrs. Santa Claus' surprise and horror, Santa held up a mouse by its tail; a mouse that he had caught in the bed clothes and now held up for her inspection. And what was worse, he soon found a whole nest of little mice, down at the very bottom of the feather-bed. This was too much for Aunt Santa Claus, who prided herself upon being a perfect housekeeper.

"How do you suppose they got there?" she asked. "But they do not account for the bed falling and nearly smothering this dear little tot."

"Oh! yes they do," replied Santa Claus. "You see they have gnawed the ropes that held up the ticking the feather bed was on, and when Gladys kicked so hard she knocked the footboard out and down came the whole bed upon her."

Just then a mouse ran across the floor, and poor Mrs. Santa Claus gave a scream of horror that nearly took the roof off the house, for like most women, she was deadly afraid of a mouse. Fat as she was, she jumped up in a chair, still holding Gladys tightly in her arms, but alas! she forgot it was a rocking chair she had jumped upon, and the first thing she knew, over it went, landing her and Gladys on the floor. Immediately, she scrambled upon her feet and ran, dragging Gladys with her into her own room; where she fell rather than sat,

Christmas with Santa Claus.

in the first chair she came to, panting the while with fear and excitement.



"Come here, Honey. Did Auntie nearly kill you and scare the life out of you by being afraid of a mouse, herself? But, dearie, to tell the honest truth, I am just as afraid of a mouse as if I were still a little girl. I am

Dragging Gladys with her.

ashamed of it but I cannot help it. Now here come Jack and Santa Claus to make fun of me I know."

And sure enough, in came Santa and Jack, with broad grins on their faces, ready to tease Auntie for the way she ran away from a little, innocent mouse.

"Now, Chick-a-dee-dees, I will make you a nice bed here on my soft lounge, for I would not let you sleep in that room again to-night for a thousand dollars."

The First Night at Santa's.

"But, I am not afraid of mice," said Jack, "and Gladys can come and sleep with me and I'll keep them away."

But Aunty Santa Claus would not hear to such a thing, so Santa went to sleep in another room and Gladys slept the rest of the night with Aunty Santa Claus, while Jack slept on the big, soft lounge.



The First Day at the North Pole.



THE children were awakened the next morning by the ringing of the sweet, musical chimes in one of the belfry towers of Santa Claus' church.

"Oh! what is that, and where does it come from?" cried Gladys, on hearing the bells pealing merrily out on the clear, still air. "I want to get up and look out of the window and see where it comes from. It is dark out, and just beginning to be daylight, for I see a pretty, pink streak of light, and now a purple and yellow one away out there where the sun ought to be," cried Gladys.

"Isn't it ever going to be daylight? I'm so tired of being in bed and waiting for morning, for I want to see all the new things up here." added Jack.

"No, dear," replied Aunty Santa Claus, "It is not going to be any lighter up here than it is now, for a long time. Come, get in bed with me and I will tell you both how it is up here at the North Pole."

The First Day at the North Pole.

"You see, instead of having a short day and night, as you had where you lived, we have a day that is six months long and a night that is six months long. During our day, the sun shines continuously, while during our night, it is not seen for six months; and our nights would be very black were it not for the Aurora Borealis, which flashes and throws exquisite ever-changing colored streamers of gold, blue, pink, lavender and green on the dark, night sky: to say nothing of the moon—the beautiful, big, silver moon—which shines continuously for days at a time, when it is full; making it as light as day up here, only the light is a silvery whiteness, instead of golden like the sunshine. Besides we never miss the light of the sun, for we have hundreds of brilliant, electric lights shining through the grounds everywhere."

"But how can you tell when to go to bed and when to get up?" asked Jack. "I'm sure I should not like to sleep six months and then stay awake six months."

"We have that nicely fixed" said Mrs. Santa Claus, "for we have the bells in the steeple wound up like a clock so they ring out every twelve hours. The first twelve hours we call our day, and the next twelve our night. So you see our time is divided up very much as yours is."

"I wouldn't want to go to bed when the sun was shining, for I couldn't keep my eyes shut if it was light" said Gladys.

Christmas with Santa Claus.

"But it would not be light in the room when you went to bed, for we have dark shades at the windows that we pull down, shutting out all light so that the rooms are as dark as if it were night."

"Oh! I know how you do it. You pull them down just as mamma used to pull down the shades when she wanted us to take a nap in the afternoon," said Gladys.

"Yes, dear, that is just the way we do."

"Good morning in there!" said Santa Claus, knocking at the door. Aren't you lazy bones ever going to get up? I am waiting for Jack to go with me to feed the reindeer."

"Oh, do wait! I'll be dressed in a minute," cried Jack.

"I want to go too!" called out Gladys.

"You had better stay in and help Aunty get breakfast and then I will take you out to see them after a while."

"All right, I'll stay if Aunty will let me stir the pancakes and bake some little ones, only as large as a silver dollar. I just love that kind, all swimming in maple syrup. Don't you, Jack?"

"Wait a minute Jack," said Aunty, as she came toward him, with a bottle in one hand and a soft camel's-hair brush in the other.

"What are you going to do? paint my throat? I don't want it painted, 'cause I haven't got a sore throat."

"My dear, I'm not going to paint your throat but I am going to

The First Day at the North Pole.

do something that will seem queer to you, and that is, I am going to varnish your face and hands. We all do it up here, just before going out, and that keeps our faces from getting cold or frozen. If it were not for this varnish, your nose and fingers would be frozen before you had gone two feet, for you must remember that you are at the North Pole, the coldest place on earth, except the South Pole."

"Won't it hurt or make me feel all sticky? And when it gets cold won't it crack off, like the icing does from cake?"

"No, dearie. It won't. It will make your face feel soft and warm."

"All right then. You can put it on," and he screwed his little face up into a hard knot, and shut his eyes preparatory to having the varnish put on, but as he could not feel the brush he opened his eyes again to see what the matter was, and why Mrs. Santa Claus laughed so hard.

"You dear little goose, how do you expect I am going to paint your face when you make it so full of wrinkles. If I varnished it now, it would stay that way and you would go about with a cross-looking, wrinkled-up face, like a crabbed old man. Shall I tell you the secret why Santa Claus always goes around with a smile on his face, and merry twinkling eyes looking out from a mass of wrinkles? Well! this is the reason. When the brush tickles his nose, it makes

Christmas with Santa Claus.

him laugh, and then the varnish runs into the wrinkles and hardens, so there he is with a perpetual smile on his face."



"Smile instead of looking so cross."

"Now, Jack dear, smile instead of looking so cross; and I will varnish you so you will always have a sweet smile on."

"I want my face varnished too," cried Gladys.

"Very well, dear, when you go out, but not now."

The First Day at the North Pole.



A diminutive Santa Claus.
you when they come in."

"All ready, Jack, come along," called Santa Claus, as he opened the door and saw standing before him a diminutive Santa Claus, for Auntie had dressed him in a red coat and hat, trimmed with white fur, exactly like the ones Santa Claus wore; and he had on the cutest, wrinkled, high-topped boots you ever saw, and gauntlet-gloves; and all he needed was the white hair and beard to make him a perfect copy of Santa Claus himself. As it was, he looked enough like him to be his son.

When they had gone, Gladys said she wanted to be dressed up too, so Mrs. Santa Claus went to a cupboard and took from it the cutest little costume, a copy of the one she wore.

"Now, come here, dear and I will dress you, so that they won't know

First she put on a soft gray dress, with a black velvet bodice laced

Christmas with Santa Claus.

across the shoulders and bosom, as the Quaker ladies wear them, then on top of her curls she set a dainty, lace cap which was most becoming. On her feet she put a pair of high-heeled, patent leather slippers with silver buckles, and fastened at her waist a black velvet bag with a lace handkerchief sticking out of it, then as a last touch she tied narrow bands of velvet ribbon round her pretty, dimpled arms, which were bare to the elbows, where a deep, lace ruffle fell away from them.

When she was dressed, she looked at herself in the pier-glass, and taking her skirts in both hands, gave a fancy dance, throwing kisses to her image in the mirror, while Mrs. Santa Claus stood by, clapping her hands and singing to keep time for her.

Gladys could courtesy as gracefully as a court-lady, and this is the picture Santa Claus and Jack saw when they came back after feeding the reindeer.

After breakfast, Uncle and Aunty Santa Claus took the children everywhere, both inside the home and out and showed them where all the Christmas toys were made, packed, and labeled with the names of the little boys and girls they were to be sent to, on Christmas.

The first things they showed them were the large work-shops and store-rooms where the toys were made and stored, until time to pack. The first room they went into was one hundred feet square,

The First Day at the North Pole.

filled with work-benches standing in parallel rows. At these benches, working, were the queerest looking children you ever saw. When I tell you what they looked like, you will say so yourself.

They were the children of the Snow King and the North Wind and so of course did not look like the children of earthly parents.

The Snow King's children looked as if they were made of snow or cotton batting, as their faces, hair and clothes were all of the same color; when they spoke, their voices had a sweet, gentle sound and fell on one's ear softly, as the snowflakes fall on one's hand; and they floated around at their work, as the snowflakes float.

The North Wind's children were so airy and breezy, one could scarcely see them; but they could be heard talking to each other in their queer, whistling voices, which sounded sharp and shrill like the winter wind when it blows round the corners of the house and through the chimneys. One could feel their icy breath, if one came near them. These children were good workers however, and seemed to like to be busy.

In this room were large windows which reached from floor to ceiling, and which were always kept open so that these children of the cold North would not melt away and die.

Some of these little people were blowing glass ships and vases, others were making soft, downy beds of snowflakes for the dolls,

Christmas with Santa Claus.

which when made they turned into feathers by some mystic process they alone knew.

You have often seen these feathers when it snows, for sometimes it happens that the north wind blows too hard through the open windows of the work-room, and the feathers float down to earth. You have doubtless heard people say, when it was snowing that, "Mother Carey must be plucking her geese," but that is all they know about it, for these feathers come from the work-room, at the North Pole.

From this room they went to the room where toys are placed when finished. Here they saw shelves and drawers, from floor to ceiling, and on all, and in all, were dolls, dolls' sleds, carriages, skates; toy-animals with real skins and hair; mechanical toys of all kinds, from steam-engines that moved by themselves, to steam-boats that propelled themselves on the water; walking and talking dolls, singing birds in gilt cages, while in the drawers were the dolls' clothes, also hats, caps, coats and furs for the poor children.

"Now, if you would like to see where we get our Christmas candies, fruits and pop-corn, you will have to put on your things and go with us to our magic garden, which is quite a little walk from here."

"In my picture books at home there isn't anything up here at the

The First Day at the North Pole.

North Pole but icebergs and polar bears, and not one of the pictures shows a tree," said Jack. "Do your oranges grow on icebergs, or on snow-trees?"

"That 'minds me," said Gladys, "Santa Claus promised me some soda water when we got here."

"Did he dear? Well, I will make you some, just as soon as we get back."

"Do you see what looks like a large, dark hole in that ice-mountain over there?" asked Santa.

"Yes," they both answered.

"Well, that is the entrance to a cave we have to pass through before we come to the locked and barred gates, that lead to the magic garden where all good things grow."

"Oh, goody! goody! goody!" exclaimed the excitable Gladys, "and can we pick whatever we choose when we get there?"

"Certainly you may and I will be pleased to have you do it."

"My! aren't these mountains high?" said Jack, "and don't they look pretty in the moonlight? Seems as if it ought to be the sunlight shining though, instead of the moonlight, for a garden."

"Here we are, Jack, aren't you afraid to go into that big, black, bug-a-boo hole? I would be if it wasn't for Aunty and Uncle Santa

Christmas with Santa Claus.

Claus. How do you like to be called Auntie and Uncle?" she asked, turning her head quickly, to look up into their faces.

"We like it very much, darling," replied Mrs. Santa Claus, as she stooped to give her a kiss on her little upturned face.



The Magic Garden.

WHEN they arrived at the mouth of the cave, instead of the big, black hole they had expected, they saw a magnificent spectacle like a fairy scene on the stage of a theatre, for the sides and top of the cave were one mass of glistening, sparkling ice, and festoons of snow-flowers that looked as if sprinkled with diamonds, they glistened so in the glare of the many-colored electric lights Santa Claus had turned on by pressing a button when he entered the cave.

"Oh my! Oh my! Oh me! Here must be where the fairy queen lives," cried Gladys. "Isn't it too lovely for anything?"

"Yes" said Jack. "I like these little red and green flower-lamps in among the ice, for it makes me think of the fireflies at home, when they wink and blink in the grass."

"Well, here we are children" said Santa Claus, as he unlocked a mammoth iron door and hurried them quickly into the most beauti-

Christmas with Santa Claus.

ful as well as the most peculiar looking garden they had ever seen. Then he closed the door quickly behind them, to keep out the icy air of the cave. Here, strange as it may seem, there were lots of trees and bushes, all green and thrifty, while the air was as warm as that of summer; but over it all was the peculiar light of the extreme north during the long six months of night.

"I am sorry you can't see this garden when the sun is shining upon it, for then it is most beautiful," said Santa Claus.

"Oh! what is that funny sound?" cried Gladys. "It sounds like popcorn does while it is popping in the popper, when we shake it."

"Look closely at that little tree behind you, and see what happens when the wind blows through its branches and shakes them."

"Pop-pop-pop" went the sound again, and from each little twig a big white kernel of popcorn bloomed out, while soon the whole tree was white with them, and it had the appearance of a plum tree in full blossom.

"You see that all I have to do when I want to make popcorn balls is to come out here and pick the corn that is already popped, and take it home where Mrs. Santa Claus makes it up into balls by pouring melted sugar over it."

"Can I taste it" asked Gladys.

The Magic Garden.

Santa Claus told both children to go over to it and pick all they wanted.

As they walked farther into this magic garden, hidden away from the rest of the world by high, ice-clad mountains, no one could climb, Santa Claus explained to them some of the wonders they saw on every side of them; the great trees, and how it was possible for them to grow because of the great height of the mountains that shut out the freezing winds of the north, keeping the valley warm and the air balmy, as in a California orange grove. But there was another peculiar thing about this garden, and that was that nearly all the trees and bushes and flowers, seemed to take a rest during the long winter nights of six months, ceasing to bloom during that time, but when the first rays of the sun peeped over the mountain tops and proclaimed that the long night was ended, and the beautiful day begun, all the trees, bushes and flowers burst into leaf and blossom, as suddenly as the popcorn tree had popped out its white kernels at a moment's notice. The ice-plants were the only exception to this rule, and they blossomed all the year round.

"During the summer months," said Santa Claus, "this garden is a bower of beauty, fragrance and song, and we gather all our fruits, nuts and other things that grow here and pack them away in

Christmas with Santa Claus.

our store-rooms to keep until we are ready to carry them away at Christmas time, to make happy the children all over the world."

"Now listen, for I am going to give you a great surprise and tell you a wonderful secret. These trees and bushes that you see, don't all bear fruits and flowers but some bear dolls. Think of it! Dolls! It is a good thing they do, for if they did not a great many little girls would have to go without their beloved dolls at Christmas time, for Mrs. Santa Claus and I would never be able to make and dress enough to go around, but as it is, all of the little china dolls grow on vines that run over poles, as beans and hops do at your home, and all we have to do is to go and pick a few bushels, take them home and have the Snow King's and the North Wind's children dress them for us.

"The light-haired ones grow on one kind of a bush, the dark-haired ones on another, but the beautiful ones with real hair, teeth, and eyes that open and shut, with real eyelashes on the lids, are found in pink and white roses as large as cabbages. We turn back the petals and there lays a lovely doll with cheeks as pink as the rose it was born in, and teeth like pearls. Most of them are dressed with fluffy, ruffled skirts to match the fluted petals of the rose. Some of our strange, wax dolls are brought far over the mountain by long-legged and long-billed storks, that carry them in a little hammock

The Magic Garden.

swinging from their bills. These dolls, and the ones we get out of the roses, are alive when we first find them, and often say 'papa,' and 'mamma,' but they soon turn into dolls when exposed to the sun. Aunt Santa Claus and I have tried every way to keep them alive, so we could take them to the children as a Christmas present, but we have not yet found out the secret of doing it."

"Oh! do get me a little live, baby doll. I want one so badly," cried Gladys. "I want one to have brown, curly hair, blue eyes with long eyelashes, and cute little white teeth; and I want her to have a petticoat wiv lace on it, and a pretty dress all sticky-out, like I'm going to have when I ride in the circus a-n-d (drawing in her breath and sticking out her tongue, a habit she had when talking) I want her to have a pretty bonnet wiv fedders and long streamers; 'sides, she must have some gold beads for her neck. Come, please do, come and take me to the bush right away, so I can pick her out for myself."

"I am sorry dear, but the roses are not in bloom now, so you can't pick one for yourself; but I have a beauty at home that will just suit you, and I am sure Aunt Santa Claus has her in a little cradle, all pink satin and white lace."

"Oh! have you, Aunt? Well then I will wait until we get back to get her, if you will promise to get her right away quick, and not make me wait until to-morrow for her," cried the impatient little Miss.

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"Well now, what does Jack want that grows in this wonder garden?" asked Santa Claus.

"I want a really, truly watch with a chain."

"You shall have both my boy. If I am not mistaken I hear some watches ticking now, so we must be near a watch-bush. Yes, here is one with watches all shut up tightly in the flowers, as carefully as if wrapped up in yellow tissue paper, which the flowers resemble. We call them 'four-o'clock bushes,' because every day, at four in the afternoon, they shut up their petals and stay shut until the next morning."

"Why, we had four-o'clock flowers in our yard at home, and they used to shut up at four o'clock just as these do, only ours had white, pink and yellow petals on the different plants."

"So have these. The yellow flowers have the gold watches wrapped in them; the white, the silver; and the pink, the enameled ones. So you can take your choice. Go and unwrap some of the flowers and see if you cannot find a watch to suit you. Here, this blossom looks as if it had a nice one in it."

Sure enough, it had: a perfect beauty with jeweled hands, handsome gold case and the prettiest face you ever saw on a watch.

Jack was delighted with it and he put it in his pocket for safe keeping while they went to look for a chain for it. He could not

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keep it in his pocket long, however, for he had to look at it every few minutes to see what time it was, though every one knew it was not the time, as much as it was the watch he wanted to see.

"I don't see why the four-o'clocks have flowers, and not the roses, so I could get my doll," said Gladys, with a long face.

"Well, you see the four-o'clocks go to sleep every day, so they can stand it, but the roses when they come, stay awake six months and then rest six months and sleep."

Walking farther into the garden, they presently came to a beautiful rustic bridge that looked as if built of ice, for the stones were carved to represent icicles and blocks of ice. It was exceedingly pretty, half hidden by green vines that grew over it, and by pink and lavender flowers that showed to perfection against the white background of the ice.

"Come and get an icicle to suck," called Gladys to Jack when she saw it.

You can imagine her surprise when, in trying to break one off, she found it was stone.

"Wouldn't this be a nice April Fool bridge to bring the Orphan Asylum children to, Jack?" said Gladys who was always fond of a joke.

"Oh, quick! quick! Come and look!" she cried as she leaned over

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the railing of the bridge and looked into the water that flowed underneath. See! It is a river of blood, for it is all red, or some one has been having the nosebleed in it."

True, the stream was red as blood but it went dancing along merrily as if it were only clear water.

"No, dear, that is not blood, though it is just that color. It is a clear dye that we use to color the dolls' dresses, the worsted scarfs, mittens and such things, besides we make paint of it and away up yonder in the mountains are springs of all colors, from which these colored streams flow down into our garden. Should you stand on one of these mountain peaks when the sun was shining and look down into this garden, you would see little brooks of all colors flowing through the green grass like bands of colored ribbons on a green dress. It all makes a beautiful picture when the fruit trees are in bloom dotting the greensward, with the white bridges glistening in the sunlight where they span the colored streams."

"Gladys! Gladys! Look quick, behind you on the other side of the bridge!" called Jack. Running to his side of the bridge, she saw floating toward them an exquisite white-shell boat, in which stood a beautiful lady holding in her hand six strands of blue ribbon reins, with which she was guiding six lovely white swans that were



Breaking into the kitchen and crying "Is dinner ready?"
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drawing the boat. She was dressed in white, with a wreath of pink roses in her golden hair.

"Oh, my! Isn't she pretty? What is her name, and does she live here?" asked Gladys, all in one breath.

"Yes, dear, she lives here but she hasn't any name, for she is not alive, she is only a mechanical toy like the little ones you have seen in the stores at home at Christmas time."

"But she is so big and so pretty that she looks alive," said Jack.

"I know she does," said Santa Claus. We made her look as natural as we could, but come a little farther into the garden to see the lake, and I will show you some little steamboats that will please you very much I know."

"Which way is the lake? Won't you tell us so we can run on ahead? We can't wait to walk."

"Straight ahead through that summer house with the golden dome, down the hill on the other side and you will be at the landing."

Taking hold of hands, the children ran along the smooth gravel path leading to the lake, but imagine their surprise when they saw coming toward them a little boy about Jack's size in a little red cart drawn by two white goats. As they jumped out of the way to let him pass, they called out "Hello!" but he did not answer them, neither did he deign to look at them, or so much as wink his blue eyes. They

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stared after him for a moment and then Gladys said "He's a dummy like the pretty lady, Jack, and we are fooled again."

"I shan't believe anything I see in this garden to be real any more," said Jack, and he pulled out his watch to see if it were only a make-believe watch; but to his joy he found it was real, for it was ticking away at a great rate. He put it back in his pocket, and on they ran to find the lake and the steamboats.

As they neared the summer house, which was built like a Japanese pagoda, with pointed roof upon roof, from which hung tiny golden bells that sent out a tinkling musical sound when the wind blew, they heard the songs of many birds; when they reached the doorway, they found the birds were in golden cages, hung in the archways of the windows; before each window stood a table, on which was delicious food, fruits and drinks. Here Gladys spied her favorite beverage, lemonade with pineapple and cherries in it, floating on cracked ice. Beside it was a plate of iced cakes, and a fancy dish of fruits, to say nothing of the different kinds of candies and other confections spread before them.

"Well, I never! Did you ever see such a lot of good things to eat, all at once, Jack? I must have some for I'm just as hungry as a bear."

"I am hungry too," said Jack, "but look at the things on this

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table: sandwiches, buns, tarts, pies, coffee-cakes, roast chicken, a bottle of red, and of white wine, baked beans in little pans, pickles, and all sorts of good things. I am going to try a sandwich, for I know Santa Claus won't care, there are so many of them."

"I am going to try a peach on the other table," said Gladys.

As their little pearly teeth bit into them, they found they had been fooled again, for Gladys found her peach was wax, and Jack found his sandwich was paste.

They stood looking at each other with their teeth stuck fast, when Santa Claus and his wife appeared in the doorway. Santa Claus laughed until the tears ran from his eyes, but Mrs. Santa Claus, knowing the disappointment they felt, only smiled and hurried to their assistance to help them get their teeth loose from the wax and the paste.

The moment Gladys' tongue was loosened, she cried, "The nasty, horrid, April Fool things! And I was so hungry, too!"

"Never mind, dear. You shall have something to eat, for I knew you would get hungry, so I brought a nice luncheon; we will sit down at one of these tables and eat it right away, and laugh over your getting fooled. The things you see here are for the Christmas trees, and that reminds me I must take you to our surprise-tree: some people call it a grab-bag tree, but I like the name surprise-tree best, for

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everything about it is a surprise. In the first place there is every kind of fruit growing on the same tree, but when you pick it and try to eat it, it turns out a surprise like Gladys' peach, for it proves to be a little box in which is hidden a present of some kind."

"I am dreadful thirsty," said Gladys.

"Are you? Well, take this glass and go over to that white stone you see standing there, in the shape of a woman with a pitcher in her hand. Say, 'please give me a drink from your pitcher,' pressing a button on the bottom of the pitcher at the same time, and out of it will flow a clear stream of water, and your glass will be filled. Here is a glass for you too, Jack. Now, both go and see what luck you will have!"

"Is it another thing that is going to fool us?" asked Jack.

"No dear, this is all right; but wait a minute, if you would rather have soda-water. Now is the time for Gladys to get hers from a polar bear soda-fountain. Take that curved path, and you will soon come to a big, white, polar bear, standing on his hind legs with twelve little polar bears standing around him in the same way, each holding a glass of foaming soda-water. Go to the one that has the syrup you like, and turn the handle of the glass, out of it will flow delicious soda-water into your glass."

"Oh! what fun" said Gladys, "Come and let's get some."

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Away they ran as fast as their feet would carry them. Presently, they came back, smacking their lips with delight, each carrying a glass of soda-water, that they were bringing to Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus.

"This garden is the gooderest place I ever was in," said Gladys, "and I should like to live here always."

"You must not say gooderest," said Jack, "or drefful for dreadful, because you are a big girl now and not a baby any more, that doesn't know any better. Must she Aunty?" said Jack.

"It would be more correct, dear, if she said the words as you say them, but she is such a little thing, I don't mind if she does say a few baby words now and then."

"Too! Too! Toot!" went a little whistle, on the lake at the foot of the hill, and Gladys and Jack ran to the door of the summer house to get a good view of the lake. There they saw, steaming along on the blue waters, a diminutive steamboat with flags and banners flying, and a band playing "On Greenland's Icy Mountains." The boat was blowing her whistle and ringing her bell, preparatory to landing at the little dock.

"Come, Gladys, come let's go and see the people get off," cried Jack, wild with excitement, as most boys are when they see a steamboat or a train of cars, and down to the landing they ran; only to be

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disappointed again, at finding it a mechanical toy, as the swan-lady, and the boy driving the goats had been. Presently, they returned with disappointed faces, and Santa Claus told them not to mind that, as he had a nice little steamboat, just the model of the one on the lake, that they could take to play with when they got back to the house, and Aunt Santa Claus said it was time to go back now. They started to walk slowly back by winding paths, past bushes that looked like berry-bushes, but on them grew silver and gold thimbles, instead of berries. The lady-slipper plants, yielded doll-slippers of every size and color, while the rocks at their roots were only rock candy. The sword plants by the streams, grew beautiful swords for the children, and the pussy willows turned into cats and kittens when plucked. In this magic way everything grew and flourished in the garden.

Soon they were at the entrance, and passing out they heard the heavy iron bars of the door slip into place and lock of themselves. As they walked through the cave, they scarcely noticed all that at first had seemed so wonderful to them. All seemed tame and commonplace, compared with the wonderful, enchanted garden.

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S they approached the house, they heard screams of laughter and joyous whistling they could not account for, as there was no wind blowing; but when they rounded the house and came out in front, the sounds were explained immediately, for on the long, sloping hill that ran from directly in front of the house, down to a beautiful lake, they saw all the Snow King's and North Wind's children at play, coasting on it; they were out for their noonday recess.

"Oh! what fun they are having!" said Jack. "Can't I go with them?"

"Certainly, my dear," said Santa Claus.

"But where will I get a sled, for I haven't any."

"Come with me to the store house; I will let you pick out any kind you like from the hundreds I have there."

"Me too, me too!" cried Gladys, and away they ran to get their sleds, leaving Mrs. Santa Claus to watch the fun on the hill until their return.

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Presently they came back, dragging two beautiful sleds behind them. Jack's was red and gold, while Gladys' was blue and silver.

"See! see our pretty sleds!" cried Gladys, as she came up to Mrs. Santa Claus, and in a second she would have been off down the hill, had not Santa Claus told her to wait a minute.

"Oh! I can't wait, I am in such a hurry! Do tell me quick, dear Santa, what it is you want."

"Look, away down at the bottom of the hill on the other side of the lake, and you will see a little white house hid among the ever-green trees. When you get there, whistle, and a swift pair of Eskimo dogs will run out. Hitch them to your sleds, and they will pull you to the top. You would get very tired, climbing through the deep snow, for you could not float like the children of the Snow King and North Wind. When you get cold, there are some polar bears in another house; these have been trained to sit on the back of the sleds, holding on with their hind legs, while they fold you up against their warm bodies and hold you tight with their fur hands, a good deal as a mother folds her babe in her arms so it won't fall."

"Oh, goodness, gracious me! I don't want them to. I'm afraid they would squeeze me too tightly, and break all my bones."

"No, dear, you need not be afraid, for they are very fond of children, and seem to enjoy their ride quite as much as the children."

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"Come on Gladys. Let us go and see them anyway." And with a "hoo-pa-la," they were off down the long, steep, smooth hill. Safely they rode the bumpers and enjoyed the bounces they got, then out across the hard, frozen, polished lake they sped with the speed of the wind, racing with the ethereal ice and snow children as they went.

The ride was over, all too soon. When they turned to look back over the way they had come, they were glad they did not have to walk back. Young as they were they noticed how beautiful Santa Claus' home looked, with its many towers and gables, set at the top of the white, snow-clad hills, surrounded by evergreen trees, while in the distance the great icebergs loomed, their ice-crowned heads above it all, as they floated in the distant Arctic Ocean.

Turning, Jack gave a whistle, and from out the house ran two of the most splendid looking dogs you ever saw. They were white as snow, with tails that stood up over their backs like white waving plumes, while from between their sharp teeth hung their red tongues.

At first Gladys was afraid, and ran behind Jack for protection. True to his boyhood he stood his ground, though the dogs were nearly as large as he, and true to his intention of always taking care of Gladys, he would have stood there and been chewed up, rather than desert her or show the white feather of fear. Dear little Jack! May he grow up and always remain true to the same principles.

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The dogs seemed to know their business, for they ran out and backed up to the sleds, as the engine horses do when they hear the fire-alarm bells ring. Seeing this, Jack went over, and hitched two to his sled and two to Gladys'. They were about to get on, when Gladys spied two polar bears running toward them, as if afraid of getting left.

This was too much for the little girl, and she ran screaming with fright to Jack's sled, climbed into his lap, and hid her head on his shoulder, clinging to him so closely that he could not move; so he had to sit there and see the bears come on, but they looked so good-natured he was soon over his fear; besides, he had had time to remember that Santa Claus had said these bears would not hurt them.

It was too funny, what happened now. When the bears reached them, one of them climbed upon Gladys' sled and sat there on his hind legs, waiting for her to come back so he could hold her on, while the dogs pulled them to the top of the hill, while the other quietly proceeded to climb up on the back of Jack's sled, and in so doing he had to push them forward with his nose to make room for himself on the end. Gladys, feeling the movement opened her eyes, and looked over Jack's shoulder, just in time to look squarely into the bear's face, as he too looked over the same shoulder. With a cry of fresh alarm, she ducked her head; but the surprise of seeing a two-

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headed boy (as he supposed) surprised the bear so, that he let go his hold and rolled over on the snow.

"Gladys, he won't hurt you. Just look at him and you won't be afraid." And all the little snow and ice children whistled "Don't be afraid; don't be afraid," until at last she raised her head and looked; and looking saw the funny bear sitting bolt upright on her sled, waiting for her.

After much persuasion, she consented to get on her own sled. When she felt the soft, warm body of the bear nestle down to her, and his arms close round her, she caught her breath with fright, but would not cry out again; being at heart a brave little girl, and ashamed to show that she was afraid any more, besides at that moment she caught a glimpse of Santa and Mrs. Santa at the top of the hill, waving to them. Then with a sharp bark the dogs started and she soon forgot all about fear in the pleasant sensation of the ride.

When she arrived at the top of the hill she was all excitement and enthusiasm, and went up to the bear and petted him, giving him some sugar that Santa Claus handed to her. Then Santa Claus made the bears perform some funny tricks like playing leap-frog, turning somersaults, and standing on their heads.

"Now, dears," he said, "go down once more and then come in to dinner, for you must not get all tired out."

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The next day Uncle and Aunty Santa Claus took them all over, showing them everything they had not seen the day before. The places Jack liked best, and the places they could scarcely coax him to



She soon forgot all about fear.

leave, were the stables, and the cute little house where the pet animals were kept.

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Some distance back of the house stood a high, thick grove of evergreen trees, that completely encircled a high wall made of blocks of ice that surrounded the large stable yard where all the animals were kept. Within this enclosure it was as warm as on a pleasant day in summer, for it was heated by some chemical substance that threw out rays of light and heat as our sun does. This chemical was put in a large ball, suspended high above the ground over the middle of the stable-yard, and when it was lighted it had the appearance of a sun. In fact it was a sun, and was made of chemicals that compose our sun, consequently vegetables would grow under its rays as well as under the real sun's rays; therefore, when you stepped into this yard everything was fresh, green, and bathed in sunshine. Everywhere one saw dogs, ponies and chickens basking in its rays. In the centre of the enclosure stood the large, red, many-gabled stable, where the animals were housed at night.

Behind it were innumerable, little yards, fenced off by themselves, and each was entered by a separate little door leading from the barn. Each door was always open, so the animals could go in and out at will. In one corner of the extensive yard, were the kennels where all the blooded dogs of different breeds were kept, while in the opposite corner were the houses and cages for the feathered pets and singing birds.

When Santa Claus opened the huge, heavy doors that led into the

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stable-yard, and Gladys obtained her first peep inside, she exclaimed with surprise: "Why, there ain't any snow or ice in here. How did you clear it all away?"

Then Santa explained the artificial sun to her, and told her he had to have something of the kind up there or his pets would all die of cold, besides, he would be unable to have any fresh vegetables. As it was he was able to have a large garden where all kinds of vegetables and plants grew. This garden was on the other side of the stable; was acres in extent, and lighted and heated by another artificial sun, exactly like the one in the front stable-yard.

"Gracious; I am too warm in here wiv my fur coat on. Please, Jack, help me out of it and take my cap too. My! but it's nice in here!" exclaimed Gladys, and away skipped the little girl to enjoy the warmth, light, and freedom from her heavy wraps.

Jack followed suit, and soon the two were running hand-in-hand, first to one, then to another yard, to see what kind of animals were confined in each.

Hearing a number of dogs barking, Jack said, "Let us go to see what kind of dogs those are we hear making such a racket."

Off they ran in the direction of the sounds, leaving Santa Claus to follow, as he could not keep up with their swift little feet.

Arrived at the gates of the kennels they peeped through the

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palings, but were afraid to go in, so stood waiting for Santa Claus to come.

"Gladys, do look at that big, cream-colored Saint Bernard dog over there, with the big brown eyes, lots bigger than yours or mine. Isn't he a beauty? I wish I had him. Don't he look pretty with his ears sticking up listening, and his big tail curved over his back with all the long hair falling down from it. It looks like the yellow feather mamma used to have in a hat."

"Yes, he is very nice, but I like those little, teensy, weensy white puppies playing around their mamma, bestest. Oh! Jack do look at that little one with a black spot on his face around his eye, like some one had hit him. Isn't he cute? See how he is kissing his mamma, and do look at that white one, with black and brown spots, climbing on its mamma's back. Oh dear! Oh dear! She is getting up and she has spilled him off. You naughty mamma, why didn't you lie still!"

By this time Santa Claus had reached the gate, and was ready to take them inside. "Keep close to me children, at first, for I am afraid the dogs will be too affectionate, and will lick your faces and jump upon you. Should one of the large dogs jump on you, he would knock you down, he is so large and heavy, but none of them would mean to hurt you. They only want to show you how glad they are to have visitors."

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She climbed into Santa Claus' arms.

"Oh, Santa Claus! pick me up in your arms, quick! Here comes a big dog, bigger than I am."

She climbed into Santa Claus' arms none too quickly, for Bruno, the dog Jack had admired, came toward them with long bounds. Jack saw him coming and thought he looked as large as an elephant. He felt a little timid; still he would not show it but stood his ground without uttering a word. Just then he jumped on Santa Claus, and tried to lick his face. Not successful in this, he tried to reach Gladys who had hidden her head in Santa Claus' neck, so all he suc-

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ceeded in doing was to run his long tongue over her neck, when Santa said, "Down, Bruno, down. Aren't you ashamed of yourself to frighten a lady?"

But Bruno wasn't paying much attention to what Santa Claus was saying; for he had spied Jack, and his long tongue was now licking his face, and his cold nose was burrowing in Jack's neck, until the little lad was nearly smothered by his affectionate greeting. He tried manfully to ward off the kisses, by folding his arms against his face; but the little arms seemed to do no good, as the dog's tongue ran up under them. At last Santa Claus came to Jack's assistance and gave Bruno a good scolding, and a slap which made him behave himself, and then Santa Claus made him stand still, until he put Jack on his back, where he had as nice a ride as if on a pony.

When they reached the fox terrier that had the little puppies, Gladys let Santa put her down, and there she stayed, making friends with the mother-dog, until she was willing to let her have all her puppies in her lap. As Santa Claus and Jack went on to see the big deerhounds, foxhounds and bloodhounds, they heard Gladys say:

"There, you nice little mother, I won't hurt your babies if you will just let me have them in my lap for a few minutes."

When they came near the kennels where the hounds were kept they noticed a disagreeable odor that nearly made Jack sick. When

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Santa Claus saw Jack holding his nose, he commenced to laugh and said:

"I am afraid you won't care to take dinner with the hounds, if you don't like this odor, for what you smell is horseflesh and vegetables cooking for their dinner. Their keepers make a kind of thick mush of this, pour it into troughs and then turn the dogs in where they can help themselves. You should see them eat it. Why! They like it better than you do ice-cream!"

When they reached the kennels, there was such a barking, pushing, and scrambling to get into the run, where they were fed, that the dogs paid no attention to them; so they went in where the troughs were, and looked over a partition that separated the place where the dogs were, from the place where the keepers walked when they poured the feed into the troughs.

"Now Jack, watch that door."

A whistle sounded, the door slowly opened and in fell, or rushed, all the dogs at once, for they had been pressing against the door. It was a queer sight to see them feed, for there they stood in line with their long ears dipping in the warm feed, and their tails standing high, waving like so many pendulums. There were hounds with tan-colored ears, and black spots as large as two hands on their bodies, and there were hounds with black ears and tan-colored spots on their

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bodies. Still others had few spots, and out of the hundred that were feeding, you could not find two marked alike.

Each dog had a different name and the keeper knew it as well as his own. Jack said he didn't see how he could remember them all; but he said "Oh! that's easy."

These dogs were all foxhounds, and when Jack had tired watching them, Santa Claus took him on to the staghound kennels. He liked these very much, but when they came to the bloodhound kennels, he said, "Please, Santa Claus, I don't want to look at them."

"Why not, my little man?" asked Santa Claus.

"Because they are the kind of dogs that they used to hunt runaway-slaves with, and I don't like that kind of dogs; I don't even want to look at them."

"I should like to know who ever told you about slaves at your age?"

"Why, you see, when I was only four years old, my old nurse took me to the matinee to see Uncle Tom's Cabin; they had bloodhounds on the stage, and I was so afraid they would hurt little Eva, that I cried, and nurse had to take me out. When we got home, mamma scolded her for taking me to see such a sad play, and I dreamed of bloodhounds chasing me and biting me every night, for a long while; so ever since I don't like that kind of dogs."

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When they came to the dachshunds, Jack's remarks made Santa Claus laugh heartily, for he said their bodies looked as if they had got stuck in a hole of some kind, and in trying to pull them out had stretched their bodies too long and they had stayed that way with their fore legs too far from their back ones.

"I think we had better go back to Gladys now, and see what she is up to; for if we leave her alone too long she will be sure to get into mischief," suggested Jack.

When she became tired of playing with the fox terriers, she had walked along and opened all the doors in the fences that separated one breed of dogs from another, and when Santa Claus and Jack came back there was a great commotion going on, for as was natural, the moment the dogs saw their pen-doors open they rushed out and into each others yards, and so when Santa Claus and Jack appeared not a dog was in its right yard; some were fighting, others eating whatever they found lying around loose, while still others were running away as fast as their legs could carry them.

The last dogs she let out, happened to be a family of collies, beautiful, long, silky-coated ones, with sharp-pointed noses marked by a white streak down the front, which gave them the appearance of having their hair parted down the middle. Gladys was in her glory, for there were five of the prettiest little roly-poly puppies one ever

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saw, and being utterly oblivious of the mischief she had done, Gladys was having a glorious time, dragging a bone on a string and watching the funny little fat puppies fall head over heels, as they tried to catch it. The first she knew that she had done any mischief was when she heard Jack behind her say:

"Oh, Gladys! what made you let all the dogs out?"

"I let them out 'cause they barked and coaxed so for me to open their gates. Santa Claus won't care, 'cause there is lots of room out here for them to run in, 'sides they think it is fun to go visiting the dogs in the other yards, and I was 'tending they were ladies going calling."

"You funny little girl. I knew there was some such idea in your head, that made you do it, for I was sure you never did it just to be naughty."

"Course I didn't. Why! was it naughty to let 'em out? 'cause if it was I am very sorry, 'deed I am; but I will help put them back."

Such a time as they had! The dogs seemed to know what was wanted of them, but they had no notion of minding right away, for they would run into the wrong yard, or if by chance they did get into the right enclosure, they would immediately run out again before any one had a chance to close the doors. It was dinner time, before they were all back in their proper yards, and Gladys wished a thousand

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times that she had not let them out, for she got very tired running after them.

"It has taken so long to get the dogs in, that we shall not have time to see the fowls and singing-birds now; so we will leave that for another day," said Santa Claus.

"Oh my! isn't that too bad," said Gladys.

"I'm hungry, aren't you Gladys, after your run?"

"Deed I am. I'm most starved. I'll race you to the house." And away they went, breaking into the kitchen door, simultaneously, and crying "is dinner ready?"

"Oh my! Can't I have one of those little cakes with icing on, now? I can't wait for dessert."

"Gladys, don't eat it now, 'cause there is something else you like—a chicken potpie, some baked sweet potatoes, and celery salad."

"All right! But please hurry, Uncle Santa, and help me first, before I begin to eat the tablecloth. I am so hungry, and smelling all the good things most makes me crazy."

Soon Gladys had her mouth so full of potatoes and gravy that she looked like a squirrel, her cheeks stuck out so.

Jack, who seemed always to have a watchful eye where she was concerned, said: "Gladys, if you fill your mouth too full, you will

Coasting with a Polar Bear.

choke," and this she proceeded to do, in her endeavor to tell Jack that she would not choke and that she had to take big mouthfuls 'cause it tasted so good.



The Boat Ride.



AFTER dinner Santa Claus asked the children if they would like to go for a boat-ride. They eagerly expressed their desire to do so, but Gladys said, "How can we go for a boat-ride up here at the North Pole, where all the water is filled with icebergs and floating cakes of ice?"

"Won't it crush our boat all to pieces," cried Jack.

"Yes, and then we would drown and be swallowed by a big whale or walrus," said Gladys.

"You need not be afraid of that, for my boat is made of rubber and whalebone, and bounds off the ice cakes when they hit it, as lightly as if it were made of cork. Won't you go with us mother?" said Santa Claus turning to his wife.

"No, thank you," she replied. "I have a lot of dolls' dresses, I wish to finish this afternoon, besides, I shall have to stay and get up a big supper for you, if you are coming home as hungry as you did this noon."

The Boat Ride.

"Sakes alive! I hope not," said Gladys, "for if I do you will have to make my dress bands bigger, 'cause I am most squeezed to death now."

"I should think you would be, with nearly half-a-chicken, sweet and white potatoes, celery, jelly, bread and butter, stewed tomatoes, cake, cherry pie, and dear knows what else, all stowed away under it. My only fear is that your little bread-basket will burst," said Santa Claus in a teasing voice.

"Well, I guess you need not try to tease me, for I did not eat any more than you and Jack did, so there!"

"That's right, dearie. Don't let them tease you," said Auntie S.

"You mean Santa Claus instead of 'them,' for Jack would not tease me. He never does, 'cause I'm his little sweetheart, ain't I Jack?" and she threw her arms around his neck, and gave him a big smack on his rosy cheek that sounded like a firecracker.

"If Jack isn't nice to me now, when we are growed up and get married, I won't be nice to him; I will burn his potatoes and spoil everything I cook for him; 'sides I will give him rhubarb pie in his lunch pail, for luncheon, 'cause he don't like it. So there now!"

"My! what a cross little wife you are going to be!" said Santa Claus.

"No, I ain't! Not if he is good now; but he is good now, so I am

Christmas with Santa Claus.

going to be a nice wife, and have pie, and cake and pickles for breakfast, and wear my best blue dress to church every Sunday, when I take his arm and walk with him, 'cause he likes my blue dress betterer than my pink one. Don't you Jack?"

And Jack nodded his head that he did. Mrs. Santa Claus whispered something to Santa to which he replied, "I hope they will."

"I think what she whispered to him was, that when they grew up she hoped they would still be as fond of each other as they were now, and that they would get married and live as happily as they seemed to think they would.

"Well children," said Santa Claus, "are you all bundled up good and warm, ready for your ride? Kiss Aunty good-by, for we must be off or we won't have much of a ride before dark."

They went out at a side door, and after walking a short distance to the top of the bluff came to a very, very steep flight of stairs which they descended, and at the bottom found the boat landing. When part way down Jack called out "Oh, look! see that big whale right by the landing with its back part way out of the water."

"You are right. There is a big whale there sure enough. Hurry, and let us see if we cannot harpoon it from the landing."

"I don't want to go boat riding if there are going to be whales swimming around in the water, 'cause I saw a picture once where the

The Boat Ride.

whale switched his tail and upset the fishermen's boat and spilled 'em out, and I 'spect they all got drowned."

"Come on dearie. I would not let any whales upset us, and if you hurry, maybe Jack can catch this one; then we will tie him up here until we come back."

The whale seemed really to be waiting for them to come, he lay so quietly in the water with only his tail and fins moving in a gentle way.

"Here, Jack. Throw this harpoon at him," said Santa Claus, handing him a long, sharp one tied to a rope that was fastened to the pier at the other end. He threw it with all his might, and it stuck right up in the whale's head.

"Good shot, Jack! Good shot!" said Santa Claus, patting him on the back.

"Him doesn't seem to mind it does him?" said Gladys. "Why don't him wriggle if it hurts him?"

"I will tell you why, dearie. It is because he is only a make-believe whale, and I was just fooling Jack."

Poor little Jack looked shamefaced enough when he heard this, but he cared less when he learned that this was kept to fool the other whales, and lead them into a little bay where they could be caught

Christmas with Santa Claus.

more easily by the men in their whaleboats with their harpoons, than if they were out in the deep waters.

"But I don't see the boat we are to take a ride in," said Gladys.

"Don't you? Well, here it is, and Santa Claus took hold of a rope that was attached to the artificial whale and its mouth opened wide enough for them to walk inside; they could see beyond, a large cabin fitted up precisely like those in ships, with little, round bulls-eye windows on either side and seats on all sides furnished with plush cushions.

"Well, I never! Did you ever?" said Gladys. "Isn't it too funny for anything, to have a boat inside of a whale?"

"Yes. It makes me think of Jonah in the Bible, that got swallowed by a whale," said Jack.

"I'm most afraid to get in," said Gladys, "for fear he might come alive and not let us out again."

"No fear of that, dear. Jump in and I will show you how nicely he can go, under or on top of the water, and I will show you how we fool the live whales, if they happen to come our way."

Cautiously she stepped on the lower jaw of the whale, and walked through its mouth into the cabin. Here she sat down on one of the seats underneath a bulls-eye window, from which she could see everything that passed them in the water. Jack sat on the opposite

The Boat Ride.

side of the cabin looking out of another window, while Santa Claus went to the steering apparatus, turned on the electricity and away through the water they glided as smoothly as if on silk.

Gladys clapped her hands with delight at the novel sensation of riding in a whale, while Jack went back and stood by Santa Claus to see how he made the boat go, for he was very much interested in machinery of any kind.

"Why! Just look Uncle Santa? That iceberg goes way down beneath the water, ever so far. I thought they only floated on top," said Jack.

"Some of them, my dear, extend twice as far below, as above the water. If it were not so they would lose their balance and be upset by the high winds, that blow here most of the time."

"Look! look! look!" called Gladys in an excited tone of voice. "See that great big black thing with whiskers and long horns coming after us. Oh! I'm so 'fraid," and she ran and climbed up on the chain behind Santa Claus, where she stood with her arms around his neck and peered from behind his head through the great glass bulls-eyes, that served as eyes for the whale, and windows for Santa Claus to see where they were going so he could steer aright.

Their enemy, the big black thing, came up to them, and proved to be a walrus. It showed fight, but Santa Claus gave him such a

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bump and fright by turning on the electricity at full speed, and running straight into him, that I believe he has not got over it to this day. The jar when they struck him nearly knocked Gladys off her seat, but that was nothing to the bump and surprise they gave the walrus, for they knocked him tail-over-head, and made him feel silly; especially as he had told several young walruses to watch him frighten that whale out of its wits.

The next thing they saw was a polar bear family, in swimming, and several seals barking around like dogs, evidently teasing the old bears by trying to swim and dive between their legs, for the bears were growling and snapping at them in a very cross manner. It was such fun to look at them, that Gladys coaxed Santa Claus to stop their boat for a time so she could watch them.

Presently the seals and bears became aware of the whale quietly floating in the water, watching them and, like a lot of children, they stopped bothering each other and all came toward it.

The bears growled "you clumsy thing! what are you doing down here in our waters?" while the seals barked out a challenge to come and fight. This the whale accepted, for Santa Claus made it swish its tail round in the water and throw water spouts up in the air more than a hundred feet high. Then Santa Claus waited until all the old seals and bears were close to the whale—they had sent all the

The Boat Ride.

little seals and bears ashore—and then he turned on the electricity and charged into them right and left, until he had driven them all on shore. You never saw such a surprised and shame-faced lot as they were, sitting on the edge of an iceberg after being driven out of the water while the whale swam away unharmed.

Gladys and Jack laughed, and clapped their hands until they were nearly smacked to pieces, they had enjoyed the skirmish so much.

“Aren’t you two little tots thirsty?” asked Santa Claus. “If you are, there is some fine lemonade with pineapple and cherries in it, in that pitcher on the table, and in the cracker-jar beside it you will find some fresh “lady-fingers.”

“Goody! I just love lemonade wiv fruit in it, and lady-fingers. Don’t you Jack? Only I fink they ought to be called “gentleman-fingers ’cause they are too big for ladies’ fingers.”

“Don’t you want some, Santa, and can’t I bring you a glass?” Jack asked before even tasting it himself.

This little attention Santa Claus noticed, and it pleased him very much to find that no matter how thirsty or hungry Jack was or what he was going to do, he always thought of others before himself, and he thought it quite remarkable in one so young. Gladys on the contrary was so used to being waited upon by Jack, and in fact by every one else, that she was decidedly spoiled, expected to have the best of

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everything, and be waited upon as if she were a little princess. Being a girl it seemed her due, and she was so unconscious that she was selfish, or a little tyrant, that every one forgave her; for they knew her heart was in the right place and that she would outgrow these faults when she was a few years older. Now, she was but four, and with her big blue eyes and dimples she looked even younger.

When the children had finished their luncheon, Santa Claus asked them if they would not like to hunt eggs.

Gladys laughed so over the idea of hunting eggs in a boat, that she nearly choked over the last piece of cake she had in her mouth.

"Very well! you little fly-away. I will show you how we hunt eggs up here in the Frigid Zone. Now when I make the whale come to the surface of the water, you look through the bulleyes on the right side of the boat, and you will see a very high iceberg with something that looks like black spots on its side toward the water. Watch these black spots, and you will see them turn into birds with bills and feet like ducks, only these birds can sit up straight as if standing on their tails. These birds come here every year and lay their eggs in great numbers, and these are the eggs the Lapps and Eskimo use for food. The polar bears also eat them whenever they get a chance, as do the dogs that live around the Arctic Circle. There are hundreds of thousands of these birds further south, but few find their way as far

The Boat Ride.

north as this, as it is too cold here for them to hatch their young. Now I will steer the boat up to the shore, and after making it fast will get a few eggs, and we can take them home and ask Aunty to cook some of them for our supper. Do you know that one of these eggs will make a meal for five people, if scrambled and made into an omelet, for they are as large as ostrich eggs.

"I think we had better go home now, after I turn the boat around. Jack can steer her if he would like."

This was just what Jack had been longing to do, and he found it much easier than he had thought. He was about making up his mind to become a captain on a whale boat like this, rather than to become a circus rider or a conductor, when all thoughts of the future were driven out of his head, by seeing before him many large black stones sticking out of the water. But what was the matter with them? They kept bobbing out of the water, and did not behave in the least as stones should. Presently two spots of water were thrown high in the air, followed by spouts from all the others, and then Jack knew that his stones had turned out to be a shoal of whales.

"Now we will have some fun," said Santa Claus. "I will blow my whistle; that lets my whale-men know there is a shoal of whales in sight, and is a signal for them to get out their harpoons, and man the whale-boats. Then I will take our boat up close, so that we can

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watch the fun. Stop up your ears Gladys, for I am going to blow the whistle now and it is so shrill it nearly deafens one. When I say 'three,' stick your fingers into your ears. Ready now, 'one—two—three!'"

Such a whistle as he blew! It could have been heard for miles, even above the howling of the cold Arctic blasts and the crackling of the icebergs. This he blew three times, and then they waited and watched the shore for Santa Claus' men and boats to come and capture the whales. They had waited barely seven minutes, when out from the shore shot six whale-boats built like life-boats, each manned by five men. The men did not try to throw their spears, until they were quite near the shoal of whales, and when there they watched their chance to get a good position before throwing the harpoons.

The main thing they had to look out for was, that when the harpoon struck the whale he did not flop his tail and upset the boat in his fury, because of the smarting dart in his back. These men were all experts but one, and he was a man out on his first whale hunt. The old sailors told him to keep quiet until they told him when to throw his harpoon, but in his excitement he forgot their caution and threw it too soon, just as a large whale was swimming close to their boat. Whiz! went the rope the harpoon was attached to, and down went the barbed spear into the whale's flesh. Quick as a flash he gave one

The Boat Ride.

great swish of his tail against the boat and over it went, spilling all the men into the icy water. Down they sunk, but soon came up again and succeeded in swimming to the overturned boat, which was floating near by. They clung to its side until Santa Claus brought his boat up to them, and making his whale open its mouth, took them all in. As soon as the last man was out of the water, Santa Claus started for shore and presently they were safe and sound in their cabins, putting on warm clothes, while Gladys hurried to the house and tried to tell Aunty Santa what had happened, but she talked so fast and gesticulated so much, that poor Aunty had a hard time trying to make head or tail of her story.

That night Gladys dreamed she was a whale, and that some one was harpooning her, and as she felt the sharp prongs of the spear in her side she screamed with pain, and awoke. She was so frightened by her dream, that she got out of her bed and crept into Jack's and cuddled close down beside him without awakening him, and when Aunty Santa Claus came to awaken them in the morning, she found them clasped in each other arms fast asleep. The next day they were wild to go again, but Aunty thought that would be unwise after the exciting adventure of the day previous.

The Children's Party.



GOOD morning children! How do you find yourselves after yesterday's boat ride?" called out Santa Claus as he passed their door on his way down to breakfast.

"Oh! we are all right! But wait a minute till Aunty ties this bow on my hair. I want to ride pick-a-back on you, down stairs," called Gladys.

"All right! I'll wait," and Santa Claus sat on the stairs and waited for her to come out. In a moment she came, and climbing on his back, throwing her arms around his neck at the same time, instead of a kiss, she gave him a little bite, telling him his cheek looked so red and round she thought it was an apple.

"You rogue, you! Now hold tightly, for I am going to give you a rough ride for that bite," and he commenced to jolt her down the stairs until she thought her head would roll off; besides she laughed so hard she could scarcely hold on, especially as Jack was following

The Children's Party.

on behind, pinching her little fat legs as they hung down Santa Claus' back.

When they were nearly through breakfast, Santa Claus said, "I have another fine thing up here, that you have not seen and that is a large menagerie. It is the largest in the world, and has more varieties of animals than any two others put together."

"A menagerie!" they both exclaimed; "Santa, you know you are joking! How could you get an elephant, or a camel over all these long miles which they would have to travel from their homes where it is hot, to your home where it is so cold?" asked Jack.

"I should fink their legs would drop off; they would get so tired, if you made them walk all the way," said Gladys.

"If you will believe me, they never walked one step of the way."

"Then how could they get here?" both little tongues questioned at once.

"Well, I will tell you. One day when I was traveling over the desert of Sahara in my comet-train, by chance there arose a dreadful sirocco. (That is a strong, high wind like our hurricanes, only a hundred times worse, and more destructive.) This sirocco swept the sand up in such frightful quantities, that not a living thing could resist its force, as it shriveled and twisted itself off in columns that were higher and higher; until I saw it leave the earth and still traveling,

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come toward my train which was a mile above the earth, bearing a camel with it. I turned full speed on and cut through the column, captured the camel and brought him here. I brought all my animals here on my flying train which I named the Comet, as it travels as fast as a real comet."

"Tell us how you captured the elephant?" asked Jack.

"I like the story of how you caught the camel," added Gladys.

"A year ago I was riding leisurely along in my train, just below the mountain-tops in India, when I saw three or four elephants climbing up the steep side; so I immediately made up my mind to capture one, knowing that I could carry him home, as I always have a cage-car on my train, so that whenever I see any animal that I would like for my menagerie, all I have to do is to tell my men to capture him. This day of which I speak, when I saw three elephants, I determined to capture one or all of them, thinking it would be better to have them all than only one, for they would be company for each other when I got them home. As luck would have it, we had no trouble whatever in getting them, and they turned out to be father, mother and baby elephant. I felt I was in great luck. The lions and tigers were the most difficult to catch, but I think I played a clever trick on them. I will tell you how, if you care to listen."

"Oh, go on! do go on! We can't wait to hear!" cried Gladys.

The Children's Party.

"Well, the very day we captured the elephant, I saw a magnificent specimen of a Royal Bengal tiger, which I told my men I must have. They said I could never get him, because he was a regular man-eater and had probably eaten nine or ten men already, to say nothing of sheep and calves he must have devoured.

"I went home that night and took our elephants, but all the way there I was thinking and wondering, and planning how I could get that tiger into my car. At last I thought out a plan, and I laughed to myself to think how easy it was going to be to catch him. I determined not to tell my men a word of my plan, but just tell them what to do."

"But what did you do, Santa Claus?" cried Gladys.

"Oh, Gladys! keep still and don't interrupt," said Jack."

"The very next day, after I arrived at home and got my elephants fixed I took just the engine of my train and flew through the sky, to where I had seen the tiger I wanted. I went as near the earth as I could without the tree tops being in my way, and waited for Mr. Tiger to come out of his lair to get food. At about dusk I heard an animal give a frightened bellow, and looking out of my window saw my tiger tearing to pieces a young heifer he had just killed. I kept still and watched to see where he would carry some of his prey, for I was sure he had a wife and babies hidden in the rocks some-

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where, near by, and I knew that the minute he had eaten his fill he would tear off large pieces of meat and carry it to his lair for his family.

"I thought he never would stop eating, but at last he finished, licked his chops, stretched himself, looked around, tore nearly one whole side from the heifer, and started with stealthy steps for his den, looking back every few steps, as if to be sure he was not followed. I followed just above his head, and though he looked up two or three times, he probably thought my engine was some new kind of a bird, for it did not seem to disturb him in the least.

"After creeping through the bushes, some distance, he at last came to the side of the mountain which he commenced to climb with springing jumps, still carrying the meat in his mouth. Presently he disappeared behind a large rock, and as he did not come in sight again I knew his lair was behind it, but to make sure I got out of my engine and went up to the rock, which I found hid the entrance to a cave. Within, I could hear the crunching of bones, as his family devoured the supper he had brought, so I knew this was his home.

"I took a good look around, so as to mark well the place, and then getting in my engine I came home as fast as I could, to complete my plans for catching him the next day.

"When I reached there, I asked where Jack Frost was, and when

The Children's Party.

I found him I asked him if he would go with me on a tiger hunt. He, being a bachelor and fond of sport, I felt sure would like to join me; but at first he objected, saying he should like nothing better as far as the hunt was concerned, but in India it was so hot he could not live, for you know they never have frost in the Torrid Zone, and it is in this zone that a large part of India lies.

“‘Jack,’ I said, ‘I have the trip all arranged, if you will consent to go. Just say the word and I will tell you how you can go to India and be as cold as if you were in your own Frigid Zone. This is how I propose to take you, and get you to capture the tiger for me. I will have a car so built that ice can be packed in it, and not melt before we get back, and you are to ride in that car in your beloved frosty air, where you can sit on an ice chair all day long, and sleep on a snowy couch at night. When we get there, all I want you to do is to jump out of the car for a minute, blow your frosty breath into the tiger’s den until he is frozen so stiff he cannot fight. My men will rush in, secure him and his family, and put them into a cage in my train, which will be so nicely heated that they will thaw out before they have suffered much. You can blow back into your cold car, and whisk! we will be off and back here, before you know it.’

“‘Agreed! I’ll do it,’ said Jack Frost. And that is how I captured my family of tigers. Don’t you think I was pretty clever to

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catch such a man-eater, without shedding a drop of blood?" asked Santa Claus.

"My! how I wish I could go wiv you to hunt tigers," said Gladys. "Yes, wouldn't it be fun to fly through the air, so fast that people who saw us would fink we were a star comet 'stead of a train! Do you ever knock a star out of heaven when you go so fast Santa? I should fink you would, and maybe you did, and didn't know it, for I have been on the porch looking at the stars some summer nights and have seen some fall. My papa told me there was a big dipper up there and he showed we where it was, and I often look to see if any water spills out. Do you 'spect there is where the rain comes from?"

But Santa Claus made no attempt to answer. At last he said: "If you have finished breakfast, we will go out to the menagerie."

They were gone all the morning, and when they came back Santa Claus said the children had enjoyed it very much, and so had he, watching them, but he was most tired out answering questions; for Gladys alone had asked about a thousand.

When Jack saw all the animals, he went back to his original idea of being a circus man, and gave up the idea of being captain of a whale-boat, like Santa Claus.

That night, before they went to bed, Santa Claus said to the children: "How would you like to have a big party with music, dancing and refreshments?"

The Children's Party.

"We would like it very much," said Jack, "but where could we find any children to come to it, up here?"

"Don't worry about that," said Santa, "I can get plenty from other places to come."

"What shall I wear?" asked Gladys, womanlike thinking of her clothes the first thing.

"Aunty Santa Claus will make you a dress, and it will be so pretty, and so becoming, that you will look like a big French doll when dressed," said Santa Claus.

"When can we have it?" she asked immediately, as now the dress question was settled she could not have it too soon to please her.

"How would three days from tomorrow suit you?" asked Aunty Santa.

"Oh! that is too long to wait," answered the impatient little Gladys.

"But I can't get ready sooner, dear, I am afraid, for you can see that I will have to make your dress and a black velvet suit for Jack, besides seeing about all the cakes and candies, and attending to the big cans of ice-cream."

"It shouldn't be hard to make ice-cream freeze, up here at the North Pole," said Jack.

"No, it is not," said Santa Claus. All we have to do is to set the

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cans of cream on a pivot, and the North Wind keeps turning them round and round until the cream is frozen; then he whistles at the kitchen door and the cook goes out and brings them in."

"Now, Uncle Santa, tell us where you are going to find the children to come to our party."

"Come and sit on my knee, and I will. You see I have a magic train of cars that speeds through the heavens fast as a comet flies. Well! I shall take this train, the night of the party, and make a trip around the world, stopping at every country I pass through, and stealing several children out of each, just for that night. I will wait until they have gone to bed, and then I will send the North Wind, the Snow King, and Jack Frost to sneak into their rooms, where they are sleeping, pick them up with their clothes, and fly up to my train of cars that I will have waiting just above the house tops. We will not stop to dress them until we get them here, but will just wrap them in blankets from their beds, and when we get them in the car we will tuck them in little berths, and let them sleep until we reach home, when we will awaken them, and tell them of the party."

"But they may wake up and cry," said Gladys.

"Oh, no," answered Santa Claus. "We will see that Jack Frost blows in their faces when he first enters their rooms, and then they won't awaken until they are up here and feel the warmth of the room."

The Children's Party.

When he takes them back, he does the same thing, only he makes a few passes over their faces, and when they awaken they think it has all been a dream; they will never suspect that they have really and truly been to a party at Santa Claus' house, and have seen all the things they dreamed about."

"Santa Claus, you are a regular wizard, so you are; I wonder if there is any single thing you cannot do," said Jack.

"Well! Now it is settled we are to have the party, and where the children are to come from to dance with, I shall have to get to work to decorate the ballroom. Jack, you can help me nail up holly wreaths, boughs of evergreen, bunches of lilies, roses and flags; for we must make the ballroom look bright, and smell as fragrant as a rose garden. Gladys, you can go to the kitchen and help Aunty shell and blanch almonds, and make sugar doves to decorate the cakes with."

In an hour's time Gladys could have been seen in the big kitchen; an apron tied round her neck, her sleeves rolled above her little dimpled elbows, seeding raisins (and I must add, that every third one seemed to find its way down her throat instead of into the dish beside her). When it came to cracking the nuts, she asked Santa Claus to let Jack help her, as it hurt her fingers to crack them, for she hit them oftener than she did the nuts.

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Gladys could have been seen in the big kitchen.

Santa Claus said he would crack them and both she and Jack could pick out the kernels, and when they were through, she and Aunty could come back with Jack and him, and tell them where to put the flowers, so they would look their prettiest.

"My! how good that spice cake you are baking smells, mother," said Santa. "Suppose you give each of us a small one to pay us for our hard work in cracking and shelling nuts."

"I am afraid I won't have any walnuts left to put on the cake, if you don't stop eating them as fast as you pick them out," said Aunty Santa Claus, laughing.

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"Mother, could you not make one of those pretty peanut-candy houses, with white icing over the windows, and doors of clear lemon candy, that you make so often?"

"Yes, and I will make another for the other end of the table, out of maccaroons, stuck together with sweet paste. In the middle we will have a fountain of lemonade, and then the whole table will be laid out to represent a flower garden, with paths on it leading to my candy and cake houses."

"Oh! won't that be too sweet and pretty for anything," said Gladys.

"And I am going to dress little dolls, and have them sitting on benches of candy, beside my fountain and walks."

"If you are going to have all those fine things, I am going to freeze the ice-cream into fancy shapes. One is going to be a white horse, on a pedestal made of vanilla ice-cream, another an elephant made of chocolate, and then I am going to have all kinds of birds, fruits and flowers, represented in different kinds of ices. One of my favorite molds is a watermelon, made of pink cream with chocolate for seeds, vanilla cream for the white of the rind, and pistachio for the green outside. I will have a slice cut out, to show the inside, with a darkey's head made of chocolate ice-cream sticking out of it."

"It sounds drefful good, and I wish I had some now," said Gladys.

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"Drefful good! Why didn't you say very good," asked Santa Claus. "How can a thing be dreadful and yet good?"

"I say it, 'cause I like to."

"Never mind, Santa, when she is older she will not use such expressions," said Aunty.

"There, mother we have cracked all your nuts."

"Thank you, very much. I believe that is all you need do for me at present, while if the children would like to run out and have a game of tag with the Ice and Snow children, they will have time before supper."

"Come on Jack, let's go! The Wind children told me they would pick me up and carry me in their arms, just as if I were a leaf, and that they would let me go whenever I wanted to," said Gladys.

Fifteen minutes after, when Mrs. Santa Claus chanced to look out of the window, she saw Gladys flying through the air like a kite, or alighting on the pinnacle of an iceberg. "Oh! for mercy's sake! I hope those Wind children will not let her fall out of their arms; if they do, she will be dashed to pieces when she strikes the ground."

"Yes, she would," said Santa Claus, "and I must stop them from lifting her up more than ten feet. They would not mean to hurt her but they are too uncertain, and one can never know in what direction they are going to blow, two minutes ahead of time."

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As Santa Claus opened the door, Gladys was blown, laughing, into his arms. Her cheeks were red as cherries.

"Oh, Santa! do come and let them blow you, it is such fun. If you don't mind, I am going again, so goodbye," and off she flew across the lawn and lit on a high pine tree. Santa Claus told them they must not take her over the water, or to the top of an iceberg any more.

"Where is Jack?" she asked, when she came back.

"He has gone down to see the whale boat and talk to the men that threw the harpoons."

"Gladys, come in now. I want to try on your dress for the party," called Mrs. Santa Claus, now appearing at the door.

"Oh, must I?"

"Yes, if you want to wear it tomorrow at the party."

Bidding a reluctant "goodbye" to the children, and thanking them for her ride, she went inside.

I wish her mother could have seen her a little later, when she stood before the mirror in her white lace dress, made over pink silk and with pink silk stockings, and slippers with silver buckles. The dress was made long waisted, with very short, full skirts that stood out so it made her lace petticoats look like those of a little ballet-dancer. On her head, Mrs. Santa Claus had tied a large bow of ribbon, in the shape of a huge butterfly that looked about to fly from her head.

Christmas with Santa Claus.

Around her neck she had clasped a gold chain with a locket attached, in which were pictures of Santa Claus and Aunty Santa Claus. This locket was of exquisite, antique workmanship, and Aunty told her she wanted her always to wear it in memory of them.

"Oh, you dearest, darling Aunty! 'Course I will always wear it, but I couldn't forget you without the locket, even if I tried."

"Now, let us call Jack, and dress him in his velvet suit, and then we will call Uncle to come and look at you both. Hide, so Jack can't see you until he is dressed."

After waiting what seemed an age to Gladys, Aunty Santa opened the door and told Gladys to come in. There stood Jack looking like a veritable little prince. He was a handsome and aristocratic little boy to look at, with his knee-breeches, short coat, ruffled shirt, silk stockings and patent leather pumps; all of which were most becoming.

"Oh Jack! how booful you do look," exclaimed Gladys, as she ran to kiss him."

"And I think you look as pretty as pretty can be," said Jack.

"Come let us dance together before the mirror, and play the children in it are our partners. Take my hand and bow to them so," suiting the action to the word, holding her dress out on both sides and bowing low to her reflection in the glass.

"Well, well, well!" cried Santa Claus, opening the door on the



Some rubbed their eyes and looked around in astonishment.
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The Children's Party.

scene. "Has the party commenced? I never knew this was the day for it."

During the next day there was hurrying to and fro through the large home, getting all in readiness for the party and dressing the Snow, Wind and Ice children in scarlet and white, (Santa Claus' livery colors) so they would be ready to wait upon the guests when they arrived.

The finishing touches had been put on the table. It was beautiful with its decorations of dark green holly leaves, and bunches of red holly berries, surrounding the fountain and cake castles; while the ball-room was a perfect dream of loveliness, with its garlands of flowers, waving palms and swinging gold and silver lamps. The grounds were lighted with vari-colored lights, changing tints every few minutes, and making a fascinating scene, as they flashed upon the cold, white icebergs in the distance, or threw a warm, pink hue over the glistening snow.

At exactly seven, by the time-clock, Santa Claus and Jack Frost, with a few of the North Wind children to help them, started on their journey in the comet train, to get the little ones from all parts of the world and bring them to the party.

As the train started Santa Claus said: "Listen for a long, low, rumbling whistle; when you hear that you will know I am returning."

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At precisely nine o'clock they heard this whistle, and presently the guests Santa had brought, were quietly borne in by Jack Frost and the Wind children, to the dressing room; by each child stood a North Wind maid, with party clothes under her arms.

As they awoke, some rubbed their eyes and looked around in astonishment; others yawned, while still others opened their eyes with a jerk as if someone had pulled them open with a string. Gladys and Jack ran here and there, talking and laughing, until in a very short time all were wide-awake, dressed and formed in line ready to march into the ball room.

Such a variety of costumes, faces and characters were there! Lapps from Lapland, in their white fur suits; Indians from Alaska, in beads and feathers; farmers' children, in calico frocks; rich people's children, in satins and laces; Parisian children, looking like wax dolls; German children, with scarlet petticoats, black velvet bodices, and white neckerchiefs; East India children, wearing only a white cotton slip; half-savage children, with a string of beads and a breech-cloth for raiment; Japanese children, with magnificent, quaint kimonos; Chinese children, with tiny feet, long pig-tails, and yellow embroidered kimonos—these were only a few of the hundreds Santa Claus brought from all parts of the world, to attend in their native costumes, Gladys' and Jack's farewell ball.

The Children's Party.



In line ready to march into the ball-room.

Christmas with Santa Claus.

To say the ball was a grand success with its dances, games, music and refreshments, would be to put it very mildly, for never had children such a good time. Next morning, not a child, except Jack and Gladys, knew he had been out of bed all night attending a ball up at the North Pole; but could they have compared notes, they would have thought it strange at least that so many had had the same dream of attending a ball at Santa Claus' home that night.



The Listening-Room.



THE day after the ball, Aunty Santa Claus showed them a great many wonderful things, but the Listening-room, in the highest tower of the castle, was the greatest wonder of all.

Just at the time it would be dusk in the Temperate Zone, when mothers and nurses were putting their darlings to bed, hens clucking their chicks under their wings for the night, while the little wee birds in their nests were giving their good night peep, Santa Claus mounted the long flight of stairs, that led to the Listening-room. Here he would take up his magic telescope, and fastening his equally magic ear-trumpet to his ear, would cast his eye into the bed-rooms of children all over the world, to see what they were doing, hear what they were saying, and find out what they were praying for at Christmas time. In this way he could discover who were the good little girls and boys, and who were the bad, disagreeable ones, as well as hear what they were wishing for, so he would know who to

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bring presents to, and just what to bring them, as he always tried to give each child what it wanted most.

One night he took Jack and Gladys with him, and let them look through the telescope, and listen through the ear-trumpet to the voices of the children. Presently Gladys said:

"You naughty, horrid boy! If you slap her again or pull her curls, I won't let Santa Claus give you a single thing for Christmas, so I won't."

"Why! what is the matter, little girl, that you speak so crossly?"

"Oh, Santa! Look through your telescope, and see way down there in that nursery a sweet little girl with long curls, and a sweet teensy, teensy baby in a crib, and see how mean that boy in a velvet suit is to his sister."

Sure enough! Just as Santa Claus looked into the room, he saw the boy jerk his sister's doll out of her hands, and hold it above her head, calling out, "I'm going to smash her head on the grate in the fireplace, if you don't give me some more of your candy!"

"I won't give you any more, for I have already given you half of mine, and you had more than I had in the first place."

"Give it to me or I'll smash her head off!" and he raised the doll high over his head to throw it on the hearth, when his arm was

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caught from behind by the nurse, who had entered the room unobserved.

This startled him so that he dropped the doll, and it fell on the tiling of the fireplace, breaking into many pieces.

"Now, see what you did, nurse. You made me drop her doll and break it, sneaking up behind me so quietly."

"Oh, you naughty boy! To lay it all to nurse and say she made you do it! You know you were going to do it yourself, just as she came in, and she only caught your arm to stop you."

"It is no such thing! It is no such thing! She made me do it!"

"Hush, children, hush! If you don't stop talking so loud Santa Claus will hear you, for who knows but what he is up the chimney now, listening, and I am sure if he heard what Reggie said, and saw how badly he has been behaving, he would not bring him that pony and cart he has been wishing for at Christmas time."

"Shut up, you mean old thing, or I'll kick you!"

"Now, I know he won't bring you anything, after saying 'shut up,' for mamma said that was too common and rude for any one to say, and that only very, very naughty, and badly brought up, children, ever spoke in that way to any one; and I'm going to tell mamma just what you said, telling nurse to shut up, and that you kicked her, too, besides breaking my doll."

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"That's it! Go and tell her!

'Little tattle-tail-tit, your tongue shall be slit,
And every dog in our town shall have a little bit.'"

These were the last words Gladys heard, for the little girl slammed the nursery door, as she went out to tell her mother.

With the slamming of the door her anger seemed to disappear; she thought better of her intention of telling about her brother; finally she decided not to do so, for she was afraid he would be punished for his bad behavior, and cruel as he was to her at times, she still loved him. At last she decided to forgive him, for she was a dear, affectionate little girl, and could never stay angry more than a minute at a time, while she never got provoked or cross, unless her hair was pulled or some cherished plaything broken. Presently she quietly opened the door of the nursery, and said, "Never mind, Reggie, I forgive you! Come and let us play."

But Reginald was in a howling temper by this time, kicking and trying to tear Katie's apron off her. When he saw Clara at the door, he let go of Katie just long enough to grab up a shoe and throw it at his sister's head. Alas! his aim was too true, for it hit poor Clara on the temple and she dropped to the floor as if shot, for the heel of the shoe had struck her, making a bad cut in her forehead.



The children of the Snow King and North Wind, helping me dress dolls.
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"Now see what you have done, you naughty, wicked boy! You have killed your sister. Run and tell your mamma, while I get some water!"

His knees knocked under him, so he could scarcely walk, let alone run. Mean as he was to her sometimes, yet he loved her—and now to think he had killed her! He could not tell his mamma; so instead of going to her he ran down into the basement, and hid in the coal bin. Katie wondered why Clara's mother did not come, or why Reggie did not come to let her know; but while she waited, she kept on using restoratives like ammonia, bathing her face in cold water, and chafing her hands. At last the little girl opened her eyes, and with a faint cry of pain raised her hand to her cut head, and whispered her mother's name. As luck would have it her mother just then came out into the hall to telephone, and Katie, hearing her steps, called her into the room.

"Oh! Santa Claus, aren't you glad her mamma has come? But you won't take that horrid, nasty, naughty boy, a single Christmas present, will you? Because he is such a bad boy, to hurt his sister just when she was going to kiss and make up, too!"

"No, dear, I will not take him a present this year, and I will see if that will not help him remember he must not hurt little girls, kick his nurse or call any one names. It will be a great punishment

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to him, for he has wanted a pony and cart, all this year; but now he will have to go without one, for he has been a very bad boy for some time. Only last week he tied a string of tin cans to a poor dog's tail. The dog was doing no one any harm, just looking for a drink of water. He was tired, hungry and thirsty, had no home, and no master to look after him, while whichever way he turned he was stoned and kicked."—"Poor dumb creatures! They often have to suffer innocently for the cruelties of men."

"What did you say to yourself just then, Santa Claus?"

"Oh, dearie, I was just sighing aloud, over what animals have to suffer because little boys and men are so often cruel to them; never thinking or caring that they have feelings and sensibilities, as well as themselves. But we must lay aside the telescope now, and go back to Auntie Santa Claus. I hope when we come back to-morrow night, we may see something pleasanter than we did to-night."

"Before we go you must scratch off that little boy's name from your Christmas books, but be sure to take his sister the prettiest doll you have, so she won't feel so badly over the one she had broken."

"Very well! I will, dear. I will let you pick it out for me."

"And what has my little man been looking at all this time?" asked Santa Claus of Jack.

"Just looking at that little, lame, hunchbacked boy, sitting by a

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window of a tenement house, in a dirty back street. See! he has just entered, and is putting together a little engine and train of cars, that runs in a little track on the window sill."

"Well! well! well! Jack, I guess you have discovered a genius, for that boy has certainly invented something wonderful that the world will hear of some day; but by the look on his face I guess it won't be long before he will be singing with the angels in heaven. Though his life has been a short, sad one, full of suffering, still he has had more pleasure than the wealthy boy, with everything heart could wish, and good health thrown in; for he has been unhappy and discontented, and did not know what to do to pass away the time, while this little cripple found the days only too short to accomplish what he wanted to do, for the good of coming generations. But this talk is too old for you, children, so come and we will have a game of hide-and-seek, or blind man's buff, before you go to bed."

The next night when they visited the Listening-room, they took a peep into many homes, seeing some funny things. One was a doll, that a color-blind girl was dressing for her sister. This little girl had been color-blind from birth, so could not tell the difference between one color and another, they looked alike, to her.

Think of it! The pretty grass that looks green to you, looked red to her. The blue sky over her head, and the ground beneath her

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feet, all looked of one color. Some color-blind people are blind only to certain colors, while others are blind to all but one. Some see everything red, others everything green, or blue, as the case may be; the only change they notice is in the intensity of the color, whether it is pale or dark blue, for instance.

When this little girl held up the doll she had been dressing, for her brother's inspection, he rolled over on the floor, and doubled himself up with laughter. She had made the dress of scarlet, and trimmed it with ruffles of yellow, thinking they were the same color, as they looked to her. Then she had made a green hat and sewed pink roses on it, with a blue feather sticking up in front.

I don't wonder her brother laughed, for dolly looked so queer, in her finery of many colors. She looked more like a monkey, than a doll dressed to represent a young lady of fashion.

When her brother told her what he was laughing at, of course she could not understand what he was talking about, as she had no idea of yellow, green and blue, for to her all things looked red. People who have a good eye for color, cannot be too thankful to God for this royal gift.

Another thing they saw, which made them laugh, was a good natured Irish cook, trying to make some molasses candy as a Christmas surprise for the children. But alas! poor Bridget had not boiled

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the molasses long enough, and when she took a good quantity of it in her hands to pull, it stuck to her fingers; as fast as she succeeded in getting it off one hand, it immediately stuck to the other, until her fingers were wound round and round with the sticky stuff. Then it commenced to run down in great chunks on her clean floor, and of course she could not pick it up, for both hands were full, and when she moved aside she stepped on it, and found herself nearly stuck to the floor. As fast as she succeeded in getting it off one hand, it stuck to the other, at the same time running between her fingers so that she was a sight to behold. Just at this point she heard a knock at the door and called "come in!" when who should enter but Policeman Pat, her beau.

"You are jist in toime to help me pull this candy," she said, "so roll up yer sleeves, put butter on yer hands so the candy won't stick and thin help me git me h'ands loose."

Pat tried to do as he was told, but he put too much butter on his hands. This made the candy more slippery than ever, and it fell apart in strings. Soon he was calling on Bridget to help him out of the mess. Just as they were trying to help each other and their four hands were all tangled together, Bridget's mistress opened the kitchen door. Biddy's jaw dropped in dismay, but soon she was smiling, for her mistress laughed heartily at the plight she found them in;

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especially the big, blushing policeman, who looked so foolish, being held as fast by the sticky candy as if he had hand-cuffs on.

"Oh my! Oh my! Oh me! I shall surely split my sides laughing at them," said Gladys, as she took the glass from her eyes to rest them.

"Jack, we can pull candy better than that ourselves, can't we?"

"Yes and I wish we had some, don't you?"

"Did I hear you wish you had some candy? If so, go over to that box on the shelf, and you will find some nice and fresh that I brought from our candy-kitchen this morning. By the way, there is one place you have not visited yet. I will take you there tomorrow. I am sure you will say it is the sweetest place you were ever in!"

"Oh, Santa Claus! You are always joking. Of course it will be a sweet place with all that candy around," said Jack.

And Gladys commenced to "ha! ha! ha!" like an older person, for she had just seen the joke.

"Quick, Gladys! Quick! Look through your telescope and see that boy having a tantrum. He has been working a long time over a little wagon he has been making, and just when he thought it was done, a wheel came off; he was so angry he jumped up and down on the wagon and broke it all to pieces. But look at that horrible false face peering in at the window, and see how scared he is. His nurse

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has told him that some day a hobgoblin would come and carry him off, or eat him up, she didn't know which, if he did not stop smashing things when he got angry. He thinks it is the goblin's face he sees. Listen and let us hear what he is saying."

"'Oh, please, Mr. Hobgoblin, don't carry me off this time. If you will go away and let me alone I promise never to smash anything again.'"

"'Very well, then. See that you don't; but mind the next time this occurs I will carry you off,' replies the head at the window. Then it immediately disappears."

"'Mercy me! Wasn't he scared? And no wonder," said Gladys. "It was such a horrid face, with rolling eyes, lolling red tongue, and ugly black hair and whiskers."

"'Look in that pretty cottage, children, and see those two cunning tots in their night dresses, trying to put letters they have written to me, up the chimney," said Santa Claus.

"'Do oose tink he will tum to-night, and det our letters,' said the little girl, speaking to the boy no taller than herself, 'nurse said hims would.'"

"'Aren't they darlings? And wouldn't I like to hug and squeeze them, Jack," said Gladys.

"'Well, children, you have seen enough for tonight. Are you

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ready for supper now, and for a play before you go to bed?"

The last night of their visit to Santa Claus, Jack and Gladys both spent in the Listening-room, trying to see if by this means they could not find their parents. Aunty Santa Claus had suggested this, and Santa Claus had said it was the very best way they could go about finding them. So they went up into the tower and turned their telescope on that part of Pennsylvania, near the great City of Philadelphia, and then began to look for familiar objects. Presently, Gladys turned the telescope so she could look at a great brown-stone house, set back in a large yard. As she looked more closely, she found she could see right through the stone and plastering into the interior of the house, and there, sitting in an invalid's chair, she saw a beautiful, pale-faced lady, with eyes closed and hands folded in her lap. She was praying; and Gladys heard these words distinctly: "Oh, dear Heavenly Father, have mercy and hear my prayer! Send me for a Christmas present, my little lost child, Gladys."

Gladys recognized her mother's voice and dropping the telescope in her excitement she cried out: "Mamma! Mamma! I am here! I am here, and I am coming to you!"

When she found that by dropping the telescope, she had lost her mother, she cried as if her heart would break; but Santa Claus told her not to cry, for he would find her again. So taking up the

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telescope, he began to scan the homes one by one, wishing as he did so that he might be able to find her, which of course he did, as this magic telescope always found what a person wished to see.

"Here, dear, I have found your mamma, so you can look at her again; but remember she cannot see you, nor hear you speak. Don't feel badly about that, for now we have found her I will take you to her for a Christmas present. Won't she be surprised, when she awakens on Christmas morning, and finds her little girl sitting beside her."

All this time, Jack had stood quietly by, apparently wrapped in thought.

"What are you thinking about, my little man?" asked Santa Claus.

"I was just thinking that if Gladys had found her mamma, mine can't be far off, for we lived right next door to each other."

"You are right, my lad. She can't be far off, if that is so. Give Jack the telescope, Gladys, and let him wish to see his mamma, and see if the telescope will find her for him."

Holding the telescope to his eye and putting the trumpet to his ear, he expressed the wish aloud, that he could see and hear his mamma.

The telescope lowered itself and pointed to the south-east, and

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there in a gray stone house, standing in the center of a beautiful lawn, he saw his mother kneeling by his empty cot, praying for his safe and speedy return.

His eyes filled with tears, that made the glass of the telescope misty, so he could not see; but he bent all his will to hear her voice offer up the prayer for her boy's safe return. Then he handed the telescope to Santa Claus, so that he too could look and see what a pretty, sweet mamma he had. It was just like Jack to do this, for he was so unselfish he always thought of others, and shared his pleasures with them.

Santa Claus took a good long look; then he said:

"It is no wonder you two children are so nice, when you have such beautiful mammas; and the first thing their eyes shall rest on, Christmas morning, shall be you two youngsters. I am willing to bet there won't be any happier women in Christendom than they, when they have you in their arms again. Now, come; for we must tell Mrs. Santa Claus the good news; good news in one way, and bad in another. She will be glad to give happiness to your mothers, but sad to think that she has to part with her gentle visitors, for she has become much attached to both of you—as who could help but be, you little rascals. You have climbed right straight into my heart, and



"Is he going to stop at that old fisherman's cottage?"
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I cannot let you go, until you have promised to come back and make us a visit every Christmas."

"Oh, we will gladly do that," they answered together, "for we love you and Aunty Santa Claus, just as much as we do our really and truly aunts and uncles," said Gladys.

Aunty Santa Claus was much pleased, when they told her they had found their mammas; but they saw her wipe a tear from her eyes, when she thought they were not looking.

"Well, Chick-a-dee-dees! What do you think to-morrow is?" she asked, as she tucked them in bed and gave them a good-night kiss. "It will be the day before Christmas, and all day long and far into the night, we will be packing Santa's reindeer-sleigh, ready for him to start with his Christmas presents for all the children on the face of the earth, wherever Christmas Day is observed. Now, you must go to sleep quickly so you can be up early and help us pack. All day long for a week, the children of the Snow King, and of the North Wind, have been painting and varnishing sleighs, sharpening skates, doing up presents in tissue paper and tying them with colored ribbons; helping me dress dolls, and knit hoods and stockings for the poor children. Santa Claus has been busy printing and painting books, and labeling the presents, so they will not go to the wrong boy or girl. I will give you each a box of our candied fruit, fresh from

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our enchanted garden to take to your mammas," concluded Auntie Santa Claus, as she closed the door after her, and left them to dream of the great things they were going to do tomorrow, and the long ride they were going to have behind the reindeer with Santa Claus, as he went to fill the stockings of all the good little boys and girls; to say nothing of the end of that glorious ride, when they were to be restored to their parents, after having been lost for more than a year.



Loading the Christmas Sleigh.

ARLY next morning the children were helping Santa Claus pack what he called his chimney-bags. These are the ones he carries on his back when he leaves the sleigh to slide down the chimneys.

These bags were labelled respectively, "Chicago," "New York," "Boston," "London," "Paris," "Calcutta," and so forth. Though each one looked too small to carry many presents, no matter how many were crowded in, there was always room for one more, the secret of this extra room being that the bag, like the sleigh, had a magic bottom. The reindeer were also enchanted, otherwise they could not have traveled through the air, moving swiftly as the wind.

Each child's present had a tag with his name and address upon it, which Santa Claus took from his big book, that contained the name of every living child.

As he read off the names from this book, Mrs. Santa Claus, the

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Snow and the North Wind children, and Gladys and Jack, would fly around and find the package corresponding to the name; then it would be put in the bag labeled "Chicago," "London," or whatever place in which that child lived. Before doing up the packages, Santa Claus always consulted his book, to see what each child wished for, because every day when he came down from the Listening-room, he would write opposite each child's name the special things he had heard it ask for; then, several days before Christmas, he would make a trip to collect from the different chimneys and mail boxes, all letters that were addressed to him. It was on one of these trips, you will remember, he had found Jack and Gladys.

When the bags were all ready for the trip, the sleigh was driven to the door, and they were stored away in every possible place; under the seats, on the seats, and upon each other, until the sleigh was full to overflowing with packages, bundles and bags, of every description, shape and size.

The most difficult things to deliver to the children, were the live pets. One boy wanted a pony and cart, another a big Newfoundland dog; one girl wanted an Angora cat, another a cage full of birds, and so on. All of these living things were carried on a flat-bottom sleigh drawn by large Eskimo dogs, guided by the North Wind himself, who followed close in the tracks of Santa Claus.

Loading the Christmas Sleigh.

When everything was ready, Santa Claus said "Come with me little Santa Claus Jr. (meaning Jack, for that is what he said he should call him hereafter), I want to give you a parting surprise. You may come, too, Gladys, and bring Aunty Santa Claus.

Taking Jack's hand he led him to the front door, where standing behind his own sleigh and reindeer eight, stood their exact duplicate, even to color of sleigh and robes, only the sleigh was about one-third as large, and the reindeer were the size of greyhounds. Young and small as they were, they had large, branching antlers. Such beautiful creatures you never saw. Their names were Snip and Clip, Flip and Trip, Flash and Dash, Splash and Clash. The back of this small sleigh was piled high with the tiny presents for little tots and babies. Jack and Gladys were to leave these at the different houses, as they followed Santa Claus down one chimney after another.

It is impossible to describe Jack's joy over his present; or Gladys' enthusiasm over a walking and talking doll, with its trunk full of clothes, hats, jewels and gloves (just like a lady), that Aunty Santa Claus had given her.

Such hugging and kissing in return for these gifts, more than repaid Aunty and Uncle Santa Claus for their loving kindness.

As Mrs. Santa Claus gave Gladys an extra hug, her eyes filled with tears, to think she was so soon to lose her little Chatterbox, but

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when she thought of the poor mothers praying for their darlings' return, she bravely wiped away her tears, and smiled to think how much joy would be brought to each mother's heart when Jack and Gladys awoke them the next morning with shouts of "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"

"Now we must all have supper, and Jack must change his clothes and put on his little Santa Claus suit, that makes him look just like me," said Santa Claus.

"Yes," said Mrs. Santa Claus, "and Gladys must get into her white bunny-skin that makes her look like a big white rabbit, so she won't get cold on her long drive through the sky, past the stars and over the housetops."

In an hour's time the reindeer had been fed, and were back at the door tossing their heads with impatience, they were so anxious to be off."

The door opened and out came big and little Santa Claus. Gladys followed. The sight of her would have made any one laugh, for she looked exactly like a little white bunny standing on its hind legs to take a look around. The hood on her suit had two pink-lined ears that stood straight up, and the coat had a little stubby tail at the back, while fur leggings covered her feet and legs. Her dress did not show in the least. Was she not the typical baby in a rabbit skin;

Loading the Christmas Sleigh.



Exactly like a little white bunny.

the very thing they had started out to find, when they chased the bunny down that long, country road, the evening when Santa Claus found them?

"Just fink," said Gladys. "We found a skin to wrap the Baby Bunting in and an Uncle and Aunt besides, didn't we, Jack? Ain't you glad we ran away from the farmer's wife?"

"Yes, I am, but I'm going to take her a lovely Christmas present, so she won't care if we did run away," said Jack.

"Oh! What's it going to be? Tell me!"

"It is something I heard her wishing for. It is a new churn, and I am going to put a new silk dress in it also, and a pair of fur driving gloves for her husband, besides a box of candy for each."

Christmas with Santa Claus.

"All ready, children," called Santa Claus. "Now, kiss Aunty good bye and jump in, for we must be off; we have many miles to go and many things to do before sun-up, where we are going."

The parting with Aunty was sad. They all cried, but Jack and Gladys promised to come back on a visit the next Christmas.

Soon they were in the little sleigh behind Santa Claus, and the Snow and the North Wind children were tucking them in and whistling them "good bye."

Santa Claus now blew his trumpet, called to his reindeer and they were off, leaving Mrs. Santa Claus standing on the porch, waving her kerchief to them until they were out of sight, which did not take long, as they mounted straight up into the sky; and soon looked like a tiny speck, fast disappearing from view.

"Isn't this a perfectly lovely way to travel!" said Gladys, as she cuddled close to Jack, with her talking-doll clasped tightly in her arms.

"I think it just splendid," said Jack; "don't the reindeer look fine when they shake their heads, making all the tiny bells on their antlers ring."

"I wonder where we are going to stop first?" asked Gladys. "You don't suppose Santa Claus is going to stop at that little old fisherman's cottage, do you?"

Loading the Christmas Sleigh.

But he did, and with his bag on his back, called to them to follow him as he disappeared down the chimney. Once inside the cottage, they found but one room with two beds in it. In one slept father, mother and babe; in the other, three children; while at the foot of this bed hung three stockings and one little sock. Santa Claus soon filled these with little presents of ginger-bread horses and other knick-knacks; then he threw over the foot of the bed a large fish-net, he had heard the fisherman wish for, and a new shawl for his wife. He next told Jack to put a rattle in the baby's sock, and Gladys to add a doll.

"We must now be off or we'll be caught, for the baby is awakening, and the children are turning over in their sleep."

Up the chimney they went, and were soon speeding away toward a little town they saw in the distance. There were only two or three beautiful houses here, that belonged to rich men who owned the foundries, but there were hundreds of workmen's cottages down in the valley, near the foundries and mills. All the handsome houses were on top of the hill, overlooking the river.

Down the chimneys they went, not missing one; but what worried Jack was, that at the poor houses where there seemed to be nothing, Santa Claus left the fewest things, while at the big homes, where the children had everything, he seemed to leave the most and the

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handsomest. After worrying his little head over this for some time, he made up his mind to ask Santa Claus why he did it, the next time they stopped, which was in about three minutes.

Santa explained to him that it seemed to be the way of the world; that the more one had, the more one got; but in this case it did not make any difference, as the children who got the fewest things seemed to appreciate them more, and have more fun out of them, than the rich children had with all their expensive presents.

Leaving the village behind, they sped on faster and faster, over tree-tops and meadows, until Gladys called out "Oh, stop, Santa Claus, stop! We are going over the farm house where we used to live, and Jack and I have a present for the farmer's wife."

"Sure enough, I had forgotten! not being in the habit of stopping here where there are no children. Go ahead, my honey-sweets, and I will wait for you on yonder hill."

Cautiously they slid down the chimney, with as little noise as possible, but when they were about to step out into the room, they heard the farmer's wife say "Hiram, you must clean those swallows' nests out of the chimney; they keep me awake at night. Didn't you just now hear them rustling around there? Somehow I can't sleep tonight for thinking of those two precious children I got from the

Loading the Christmas Sleigh.

Orphan Asylum, who wandered off, and got lost or stolen. I do hope nothing has happened to them."

"Oh, go to sleep, Miranda. They are all right," and with a sigh she turned over and finally went to sleep, dreaming they came to her with a present and a Christmas kiss. Her dream came true; for that is just what they did. Then they scrambled up the chimney and were off for the Orphan Asylum, where they left a present for every child and helped Santa Claus trim the tree with lovely-colored balls, tinsel cornucopias filled with candy, strings of popcorn, glass icicles, gilded nuts, oranges, horns, dolls, pincushions, sugar dogs and horses, and the hundred and one other things that children like to find on a Christmas tree. After they left the Orphan Asylum Santa Claus said:

"Now, Chick-a-dee-dees, tuck yourselves in warm, for I am not going to make another stop until I find your homes, because it is getting near morning, and I must be well on my way back to the North Pole, before it is light, or some of the early risers will see me."

From now on Jack and Gladys looked over the sides of the sleigh, as they slid through the frosty air close to the housetops, keeping a sharp lookout for the first glimpse of a big brown-stone house set in a large yard.

"Oh, Jack! Look, look! I see the rooster weather-vane on

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top of the barn above the trees, so I know we are nearly there. I feel as if I were going to cry. Don't you? I am so glad to get home."

But Jack did not answer. He was too busily engaged in steering his reindeer in a straight line to his home, where he saw the white cupola shining in the moonlight.

"Whoa, Prancer! Keep still, Dancer!" and Santa Claus' reindeer came to a halt just over Gladys' home. Jack helped her out, after she had nearly hugged and kissed his head off, at the same time making him promise to come over the first thing in the morning, and tell her what his mamma said when she first saw him. "Cause, I shall be lonesome wivout you," she said. Then turning to Santa Claus she threw her arms around his neck, kissed him again and again saying, "You dearest, darling Santa Claus! You don't know how I love you and how I hate to leave you."

He responded with a big hug, and promised that she had not seen the last of him; for he would come next year and take her home with him at Christmas time. The last glimpse he caught was of the rosy-tipped ears of the rabbit skin, as she disappeared down the chimney.

He next took leave of Jack, with a hearty hug and kiss, charging him not to forget his old Uncle who loved him as if he were his own.

Santa Claus got into his sleigh, gathered up the reins and begun

Loading the Christmas Sleigh.

his journey back to the North Pole. But his heart was heavy, and tears were in his eyes, as he thought of leaving the two dear children behind. At last he said to himself, "What a selfish old fellow you are, to want to keep them, when their poor parents were nearly dead with anxiety and worry, over their absence." Cracking his whip, and humming a merry tune, he disappeared beyond the clouds, just as the sun came up proclaiming another Christmas Day.

After Santa Claus had left the children in their homes, beside their mother's beds, they both sat quietly as mice, for fear of awakening them before morning; until Jack's mother, when dreaming, stretched out her arms and whispered, "My boy! my darling boy!" At first he thought she must be awake and was holding out her arms to him, but looking closer he saw her eyes were shut and knew she must be dreaming that she saw him. However, dreaming or not, he could not sit there and resist those outstretched arms, so he quietly crept into them and laid his head upon her shoulder. As his little head touched her, and she felt his warm breath on her neck, she closed her arms about him, gently cooing to him in her sleep. The fact that he was really at home, and in his own dear mamma's arms, was too much for the tender-hearted little fellow. Tears began to roll silently down his cheeks. When they dropped on her bare neck, she stirred in her sleep, and dreamed it was raining; half-awake, she

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put up her hand to brush off the drops, when she touched a little warm face, pressed close to hers. It would have frightened her, had she not just dreamed that she had found her long-lost boy. As it was she pinched herself to see if she were not dreaming still. She must be, for how else could her darling be in her arms! Her eyes opened wider and wider, as she stared at the little head pillowed in her arms. Then, with a cry, "My darling! my darling! It can't be true!" she squeezed him tightly to her to see if he were alive, or only a creature of her dream. But no, the little figure squeezed back, and whispered, "Mamma, mamma! my darling mamma!" Then she knew it was real, and that in some miraculous way, her boy had been restored to her.

From then until the Christmas bells rang in the morning, he spent the time telling his mamma how a dark man had stolen them, taken them to the Orphan Asylum, and all the rest of the story you already know.

When she asked about Gladys, she was delighted to learn that she too had come back, and was probably at that minute kissing her mother nearly to death.

As we who write books have magic eyes, and can look right through the walls of houses, I will take a peep and tell you what Gladys and her mamma are doing.

Loading the Christmas Sleigh.

I found Gladys sitting up in bed between her papa and mamma, facing them and telling all her adventures, as fast as her little tongue can move. She is drawing in her breath and sticking out her tongue worse than you ever saw her do before, she is so excited; besides, she is interrupted every now and then by her mother grabbing her and clasping her to her heart, while she rains kisses upon her face and hands, at the same time breathing a silent prayer of thankfulness to God for bringing her darling baby back to her.

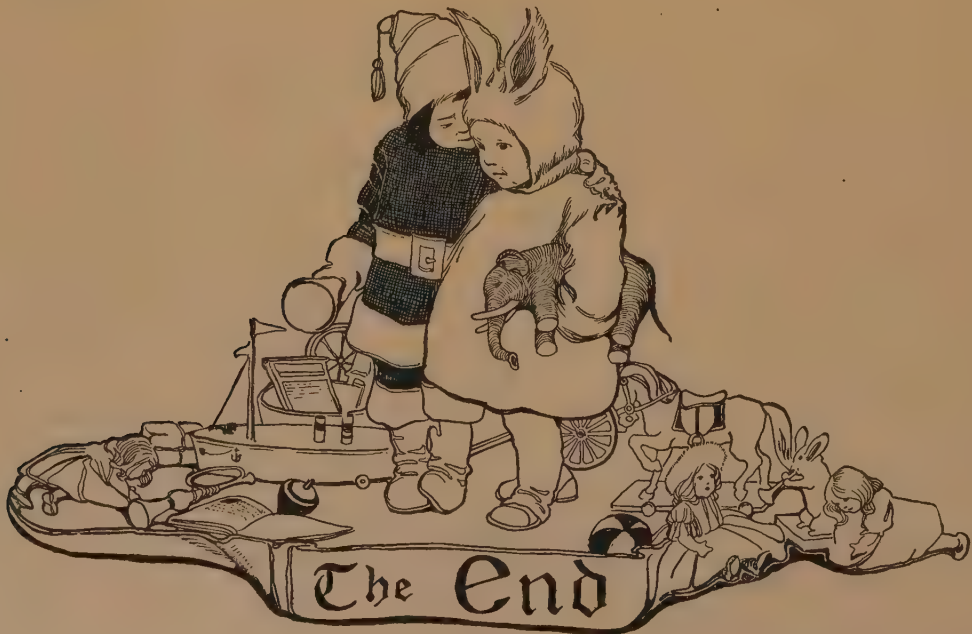
Next morning the two children met, and told each other what their mammas said and did, when they first saw them. This is how Gladys told her story.

“A-n-d I sat there just as still as a mouse after Santa Claus left me a-looking and a-looking at her face in the moonlight until I got lonesome and tired cause it was so drefful still and I wanted to kiss her so bad I most burst a-n-d I knew I would burst and that would make a noise and awaken her, so I thought I had best kiss her quiet-like at first so I tip-e-toed-tipped up to the bed and kissed her smack in the mouth. Then I kissed her again and she kissed back and put her arms around me. Then I began to cry, ‘Oh, mamma dear, wake up! wake up! I can’t stand it until Christmas morning to speak to you.’ She was so s’prised she nearly dropped me out of her arms onto the floor, then she sat up in bed and said, ‘Harry! Harry! (That is

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my papa's name) I am going crazy, for I dreamed I held my child my arms, and now I am awake I think I still see her standing in the moonlight.' Papa raised his head, and there I stood looking right back at him. I gave a hop and skip, and jumped upon the bed and told mamma that it wasn't a dream, but that I was really and truly there and she could feel me. Well, Jack, after that I don't 'member what we said, for we all talked, cried and kissed at once."

While Jack is telling Gladys what his mamma said, I will steal away and wish all my little readers a Merry Christmas and many of them.



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CHRISTMAS WITH SANTA CLAUS

By Frances Trego Montgomery

¶ Santa carries two little children away to Santa Claus land in his wonderful sleigh. There they meet Mrs. Santa, are shown a royal good time for a few days just prior to Christmas, and then Santa brings them back to their homes when he makes his annual trip.

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Christmas With Santa Claus

By
FRANCES
TREGO
MONTGOMERY
Author of
BILLY
WHISKERS



Ruth Hallock.

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